

THE  
EASTERN QUESTION.

BY THE LATE  
VISCOUNT STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE  
K.G., G.C.B.

~~BEING~~

*A SELECTION FROM HIS WRITINGS DURING THE  
LAST FIVE YEARS OF HIS LIFE.*

WITH A PREFACE  
BY ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY, D.D.,  
DEAN OF WESTMINSTER.

WITH A MAP.

LONDON :  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

~~1881~~

**LONDON :**

**BRADBURY, AGNEW, & CO., PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.**

## PREFACE.

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I HAVE been asked to write a few ~~prefatory~~ words to the accompanying pages, which contain some slight record of the opinions of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe on questions which, having occupied his mind for his whole public life, were also the constant subject of meditation in his later years. For such a task there are many qualifications which belong in a much larger degree to others whose acquaintance with the departed statesman extended over a much longer period and was pursued into more complete intimacy. But I cannot but respond to a wish so expressed, and at the same time indulge my own grateful sense of kindness long experienced. Though I cannot undertake to add anything which throws light on the subjects discussed, I may perhaps contribute a few words of my own recollections, few and far between as they were, yet still never to be forgotten.

My first sight of Lord Stratford was in the spring of 1853, when, on returning from my earliest visit to the East, I found myself at Constantinople. It was

on the eve of the troubles which preceded the Crimean war. Prince Menschikoff had just left the Russian Embassy, and Lord Stratford, it may well be supposed, had not a moment of leisure to snatch from the difficulties and responsibilities of the crisis. I went every day to the Embassy in the hope of being able to obtain a few moments' interview; for I had already conceived an intense desire to catch a glimpse of one whose name was then in all men's mouths. It was not till the last morning of my stay at Constantinople that he found a vacant half hour to receive me. Never have I received the impression of so regal a presence as when, in his own Imperial Embassy, he entered the room with that majestic figure and commanding countenance which seemed to scatter all common things to the winds; and when, after having addressed to me three searching questions on the monuments of Egypt, on the geology of Arabia, and on the Holy Places of Palestine, he suddenly lifted, or appeared to lift, the veil which hung over the distractions of the Eastern Question. He spoke with that mixture of frankness and dignity which so remarkably characterised all his expressions; and I remember the kind of thrill which his parting words inspired: "What is most remarkable in the present situation is the extreme obscurity of the future. We cannot foretell what is to take place. It may be that all this will pass away, and affairs continue to move



as before. Or it may be that 'the wolf has come at last'—that we are approaching that great event to which the world has been looking forward for so many years, the dissolution of the Turkish Empire." That event is not yet accomplished; but Lord Stratford's part in the transactions which have centered round it has since become historical. Mr. Kinglake's vivid account of his control over the Eastern capital contains sentences which will be graven on the mind of every one who from that time forward heard or saw anything of Lord Stratford's dealings, as the very expressions which were needed to give the key to his tremendous power. "The fierce temper which was always under control when purposes of state so required was so far from being an infirmity, that it was rather a weapon of exceeding sharpness, being always wielded so as to have more tendency to cause dread and surrender, than to generate resistance." "The care with which every judgment that he pronounced was enfolded in words so complete as to exclude the idea that it could ever be varied, was such that, as though yielding to fate itself, the Turkish mind used to bend and fall before him." He describes how, when "the great Eltchi" returned to Constantinople, "the event spread a sense of safety, but also of awe;" and he adds the instructive truth, that all the time "Lord Stratford was unconscious of exercising the ascendancy which he

did; and, imagining that men gave way to him because he was in the right, he never came to understand the awe which he inspired."

I heard in 1855, from the most intimate sources, of Lord Stratford's conduct during the trying disasters and anxieties of the terrible winter of the Crimean war. I heard, and seemed to myself almost to have seen, the unwearied energy with which, under the weight of all the cares which his great office drew upon him, he applied himself, or induced others to apply themselves, to attend to the innumerable wants of the soldiers in hospital or in camp, and to control by all the means in his power the weltering chaos into which the world of the Bosphorus had fallen. Whatever could be done by tenders of pecuniary aid where it was needed, of personal kindness where personal kindness was felt even more than money or gifts, was rendered by him in that hour of necessity. When I have been told of complaints of letters remaining unanswered which called for an immediate reply, I have been tempted to ask whether such letters did not reach him sometimes (it may be through the imperfect transmission of the posts of the Turkish Empire) by thirty or forty at a time, and whether in the interval he had not done all and more than all that such letters demanded.

I went again to Constantinople in the autumn of 1861. Lord Stratford had then retired from what

may be truly called his throne in the East; but the renown of his deeds still lived, and they were regretfully remembered by all of every race and creed who had benefited by them. Wherever British Consuls resided on the shores of the *Ægean* or the *Bosphorus*, they had tales to tell of instant redress of wrongs furnished by Lord Stratford's indignant remonstrances to the Sublime Porte. Wherever Greek or Armenian felt that they had suffered in person or fortune, it was known that in him there existed a terror to evil-doers which none could confront with impunity, a refuge for the desolate and oppressed which none could seek in vain. The monks of Mount Athos, however secluded from the stir of the world, yet glowed with admiration whenever they mentioned the one European name that had come to their ears,—as the representative of more than English magnanimity and generosity—the great name of Stratford Canning.

His policy was as simple as it was effective—to maintain the Ottoman Empire by reforming its abuses. The Turks listened to his rebukes because they knew that he was their friend. In his activity, his constant vigilance, his entire elevation above any personal consideration, the tottering fabric of the Eastern monarchy, which for years he held in his mighty grasp, had at once the best bulwark against its ruin, the best guarantee against its evil deeds. The sentiments expressed in his early youth to a Turkish statesman who coun-

selling him against pressing some claims of English merchants on the reluctant Porte animated his whole career and were the secret of his great success. The Turk had urged him to forego these claims for the moment, in order that he might carry out the Treaty of Bucharest, which would be the making of his future career, and for that purpose to postpone "these little things" to some more opportune time. The young English diplomatist paused for a moment, and then said: "Nothing which concerns the greatness of England is little." He persevered, and carried both the claims and the Treaty.

In later years I was more freely admitted to his presence. The sight of such an example was, indeed, like passing into an atmosphere raised far above the base and sordid motives of party strife and triviality. Such an old age, with the fire of youth subdued but not extinguished, with the experience of years giving fresh life to the memory of the past, was sufficient to enkindle every better feeling. The lightning which of old had lain beneath his brows and shaken the Sultan on his throne, seldom broke forth, yet it was always there, and he knew it. "How striking," he said, "is that description of David, when in his extreme age he hears of the revolt of Adonijah. The old man rises up,—gives all the needful directions—David is himself again!" So long as that grand old man continued to exist, one felt, it has been truly

expressed, as if "somehow the greatness of England was not extinct." In the long hours in which he was confined to his lonely chamber, he loved to dwell partly on the memory of past years, partly on the classical studies of which he never ceased to retain the liveliest recollection, partly on the great and solemn themes which naturally stole over his solitude. Stories of his diplomatic life, recollections of the celebrated persons he had met—above all a grateful admiration for his illustrious kinsman, George Canning, were amongst the prevailing thoughts that occupied his mind. "His union of wit, generosity, and eloquence" (he would say) "impressed me with a sense of superiority beyond any other man that I have ever seen." He used to repeat, as eminently characteristic of him, those lines from his poem on the installation of the Duke of Portland, speaking of the effect of the Grecian games :

"Courage and dauntless toil—the thirst of fame  
Unquenchable—the blush of generous shame—  
Their country's loyal love, and friendship's holy flame."

Virgil was constantly in his mouth: the tenderness and majesty of the Latin poet were a constant solace. His thoughts went back to the day that the news of Pitt's death reached Eton. There came in the course of the lesson these lines :

. . . utcunque ferent ea facta minores,  
Vincet amor patriæ, laudumque immensa cupido.

Their appropriateness struck him forcibly at the time, and, as he repeated them, it seemed as if the lapse of years had but filled their magnificent cadence with a yet fuller meaning. He had twice been taken as a boy into the House of Commons by Pitt. He recalled how on one of these occasions "Pitt threw the doors of the House wide open as he entered, and banged them behind him. When he rose to speak, the Opposition began with hoots and cries. In a deep voice, which could not be imitated, laying his hands on the table, he exclaimed, 'Am I to be interrupted by clamour?' A dead silence instantly followed. In that silence I read the history of twenty years." His poem on Alfred was the result of long and early meditations. "I once spoke of Alfred to the Sultan—how great a king he was, how much he had done for his country, and how he was still remembered. I did it with the hope of stirring him up to good deeds. When I came back from the Palace I read in the newspapers that they were celebrating in England at Wantage the 1000th anniversary of Alfred's birth. He was Sir Charles Grandison on the throne, perhaps a too complete model of stately virtue. The fact is that he was too good to be interesting." He often spoke of Shakspeare. "'Reverence is the angel of the world.' How profound is that line! I should like to write an essay upon it; on the softening, elevating effect of Reverence on the minds of men. Shakspeare's

great characteristic was the truth and delicacy of his thoughts and the truth and delicacy of his expressions."

His memory, even of quotations, was retained with unusual faithfulness to the end. He repeated Ken's evening hymn which he had learned from his nurse ninety years before, as freshly as if he had heard it on the preceding day. "I have never read it since, and I have never forgotten it."

He asked himself the question why there should be a future existence, and he answered: "Because on any other hypothesis the world would be a piece of magnificent nonsense." He asked himself the question, "Why am I a Christian?" and he answered: "I am a Christian, taking Christianity in the large and on the whole, and not dwelling on its smaller difficulties or minute controversies. I am a believer of its grander parts, I accept it *en grand*." Amidst the grander parts of Christianity he sought to dwell on "the greatest of miracles," that which threw all others into the shade, the miracle of the moral character of Jesus Christ. With meditations like these, of which the pages which follow are the imperfect outpouring, his life drew to its close.

Ten days before the end, he received a visit from the son of an aged diplomatic friend, who had preceded him to the grave a few years before at the advanced age of ninety-three—David Morier, for whom he always evinced the deepest regard and respect. The son, who is now the distinguished

Minister of England in Portugal, thus records his final visit:—"His intellect was as clear, his speech as incisive, his interest in poetry and politics as keen, as when I last saw him, three years ago. It was a beautiful English summer afternoon; a warm sun lit up his pale features, which fully retained their splendid outlines, and were entirely wanting in the wrinkles or withered look of extreme old age. I could not help thinking of the lines:—

‘Slow sinks more lovely ere his race be run.’

He seemed some grand old Titan majestically sinking to his rest in all his glory, as if he knew the Infinite was waiting to receive him with all due honour."

He rests in the humble churchyard at Frant, in the presence of that expanded view over plain and hill which he had so often enjoyed. He deserved, it might have seemed, the highest funeral honours which the nation could bestow. But the dark shadow of the Turkish Empire cast its own shade of unpopularity over the statesman who had been so deeply identified in the public mind with the arduous task of supporting its existence; and the long retirement from public life, although glorified by the bright glow of his setting splendour, threw into the background those services to his country and to humanity at large which will long cause his name to be venerated by all who value the noble career of the Greatest English Ambassador in this century.

A. P. S.



*May 1st.*—Outbreak of insurrection in Bulgaria.

*May 6th.*—Mussulman riot at Salonica, murder of the French and German Consuls.

*May 13th.*—*The Berlin Memorandum* drawn up by the Chancellors of the three Emperors who met for the purpose at Berlin. Proposes to insist with energy on an armistice of two months between the Porte and the insurgents in order to open a way for direct negotiations between the Turkish Government and the Herzegovinian and Bosnian delegates on the following points :—

1. That materials for the reconstruction of dwelling-houses and churches should be furnished to the returning refugees, and their subsistence should be assured to them till they could support themselves by their own labour.
2. In so far as the distribution of help should appertain to the Turkish Commissioner he should consult as to the measures to be taken with the mixed commission mentioned in the note of the 30th Dec. (Andrassy Note,) to guarantee the *bonâ fide* application of the reforms and control their execution. This Commission should be presided over by a Herzegovinian Christian, and be composed of natives faithfully representing the two religions of the country. They should be elected as soon as the Armistice should have suspended hostilities.
3. In order to avoid any collision, advice should be given at Constantinople to concentrate the Turkish troops, at least until excitement has subsided on some points to be agreed upon.
4. Christians as well as Mussulmans should retain their arms.
5. The Consuls or Delegates of the Powers shall keep a watch over the application of the reforms in general, and on the steps relative to the repatriation in particular.

*May 19th.*—The British Government refused their concurrence in the Berlin Memorandum on the ground that the proposals could not be carried out by the Porte, and that if they could, the remedy would be only partial and fall short of the exigences of the case.

*May 24th.*—British fleet ordered to Besika Bay.

*May 29th.*—Deposition of Sultan Abdul Assiz and proclamation of his nephew Murad V. in his place.

*June 9th.*—Statement of Mr. Disraeli in Parliament that the steps taken by Government in the affairs of the East were leading to the maintenance of honourable peace—Berlin Memorandum would not be presented.

*June 23rd.*—Alleged cruelties committed by the Turks in the suppression of the Bulgarian Insurrection published in *The Daily News*.

*June 30th.*—Servia and Montenegro declare war on Turkey.

*August 24th.*—Prince of Servia, repeatedly beaten by the Turks, asks for the mediation of the Powers.

*August 31st.*—Sultan Murad V. deposed in favour of his brother, Sultan Abdul Hamid.

*September 6th.*—Publication of Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet, "Bulgarian Horrors."

- November 1st.*—Armistice of eight weeks demanded by Russia in an Ultimatum dictated by the utter collapse of the Servian army.
- November 2nd.*—The Emperor of Russia pledges his most sacred word of honour that he has no ambitious purpose, and if forced to occupy Bulgaria will only do so provisionally.
- November 10th.*—The Czar announces publicly at Moscow his intention of acting alone should the Porte resist the demands of the Powers.
- November 20th.*—Mobilization of the Russian army announced.
- December 23rd.*—First meeting of the Conference at Constantinople and simultaneous announcement of the Turkish Constitution.
- December 28th.*—Prolongation of the Armistice.

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- January 20th.*—Close of the Conference at Constantinople and final rejection by the Porte of the terms offered by the Powers. Reduced to a minimum they were : An International Commission nominated by Europe, without executive powers, and the appointment of Valis (Governors-General,) for five years, by the Sultan, with the approval of the guaranteeing Powers.
- February 27th.*—Peace concluded at Constantinople between the Porte and Servia.
- March 19th.*—Opening of the first Turkish Parliament.
- March 31st.*—London Protocol signed—The Powers accept the assurances of the Porte as regards Reform—Recommend disarmament in face of peace with Servia and Montenegro.—Russian Emperor will treat of disarmament on his side if Turks will send a Special Envoy to St. Petersburg—Should the Sultan fail in his promises, and the state of the Christian populations not improve, the Powers reserve to themselves the right of deciding what further must be done.
- April 10th.*—The Porte's answer to Protocol. She takes her stand on the Treaty of 1856, and admits no right of interference in her internal affairs.
- April 24th.*—Declaration of war by Russia.
- May 1st.*—British proclamation of neutrality and entire disavowal and disapproval of the act of Russia, with further declaration that the latter has intentionally prevented a peaceful solution.
- June 12th.*—Montenegro recommences hostilities.
- June 22nd.*—Russians cross the Danube.
- June 25th.*—Serious Russian reverses in Asia.
- July 20th.*—Russian repulse at Plevna.
- August 4th.*—Russian Imperial guard and re-inforcements ordered to Bulgaria.
- October 15th.*—Defeat of Turks in Asia.
- November 18th.*—Fall of Kars.
- December 10th.*—Fall of Plevna.
- December 14th.*—Servia declares war a second time.

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*January 8th.*—Turkey proposes Armistice.

*January 10th.*—Capture of the Schipka Pass.

*January 20th.*—Russians enter Adrianople.

*January 23rd.*—British fleet ordered to Constantinople and then counter-manded.

*January 28th.*—Terms of Peace as communicated to Count Schouvaloff announced in the House of Commons. Chancellor of the Exchequer moves for a vote of credit for £6,000,000.

*February 7th.*—Russians continue to advance on Constantinople. British fleet finally ordered to the Bosphorus.

*March 3rd.*—Treaty of San Stefano signed at Constantinople between Russia and Turkey, of which the principal clauses follow: A cession of territory to Servia and Montenegro and their complete independence. Bulgaria largely extended and raised to a principality, with a Prince elected by the people, and a seaport on the *Ægean*. Navigation of the Bosphorus free to merchant vessels in peace and war alike. 50,000 Russian troops to occupy Bulgaria for two years. Batoum, Ardahan, Kars and Bayazid, with the territories comprised, remain in the hands of Russia. A separate treaty between Turkey and Roumania, who was to make her own demand for indemnity. Russia to receive the Dobrudja in order to exchange it for Bessarabia with Roumania. War indemnity of £47,500,000 besides the Dobrudja.

*March 7th.*—Prince Bismark consents to preside over a European Congress at Berlin.

*April 2nd.*—Lord Salisbury's Circular explaining why England could not go into the Congress without the whole Treaty of San Stefano being open to discussion, and animadverting on the discrepancy between Russia's demands now and her protestations in the past.

*April 17th.*—Dispatch of Indian troops to Malta.

*June 4th.*—Anglo-Turkish Convention signed at Constantinople. *Text:*—“If Batoum, Ardahan, Kars, or any of them shall be retained by Russia, and if any attempt shall be made at any future time by Russia to take possession of any further territories of his Imperial Majesty the Sultan in Asia as fixed by the definitive Treaty of Peace, England engages to join his Imperial Majesty the Sultan in defending them by force of arms. In return, the Sultan promises to England to introduce necessary reforms, to be agreed upon later between the two Powers, into the Government; and for the protection of the Christian and other subjects of the Porte in these territories, and in order to enable England to make necessary provisions for executing her engagements, the Sultan further consents to assign the Island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by her.”

*June 13th.*—First sitting of the Berlin Congress.

*July 13th.*—Last sitting of the Berlin Congress. “Treaty of Berlin.” Balkans to form Southern boundary of Bulgaria. Austria to occupy

## TABLE OF EVENTS.

Bosnia and Herzegovina provisionally, in the interests of Peace. Montenegro to have Antivari and an increase of territory. Servia also to receive an extension. Rectification of Greek frontier recommended. Part of Bessarabia, confiscated by the Treaty of 1856, to be restored to Russia. The Dobrudja, including Silistria and Mangâlia, to Roumania. Batoum, Kars and Ardahan all to become Russian, with the proviso that Batoum should be made a free commercial port. War indemnity not payable till all anterior claims are satisfied.

*July 22nd.*—Sir Garnet Wolseley located in Cyprus.

# INTRODUCTION.

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IN presenting these Papers under their collected form to the attention of statesmen and general readers, there would seem to be little necessity for adding to a title-page which says that the subject is the "Eastern Question" and the writer Lord Stratford de Redcliffe; but it is thought that what follows may be here advantageously quoted. When submitting to public attention the sketch of a proposed plan of settlement in September, 1876, Lord Stratford wrote thus:—  
"The purpose which I entertain of stating—in outline, at least—a plan of settlement, including all its items, ~~would doubtless be imprudent on the part of anyone invested with responsibility.~~ Free as I am from that ~~trammel,~~ the hope of helping by my experience to clear the ground of negotiation, and an impulse bordering on a sense of duty, have alone prevailed over my natural reluctance to face the risk of so delicate a task. May those who honour me with their attention be indulgent. I claim their indulgence in virtue of my purpose. Peace is the goal in view, peace in the first instance by hastening the termination of war" (then existing between Turkey and her dependen-

cies); "peace in the second by enabling the Turks to remain in Europe with a firmer hold on their position, and less anxiety, not to say less scandal to their Christian supporters. I have nothing to do with party politics. Independence, whether silent or outspoken, becomes my very advanced age. I cannot agree with those sanguine writers who dream of Turkey being 'the cornerstone of Western freedom,' but I go so far as to persuade myself that with competent guidance the Ottoman authorities, and even their subjects, may be trained to conform to those changes which alone can realise the policy of giving them a durable place in the group of European states. To leave them to themselves would be equivalent to leaving them at the mercy of ambitious neighbours actuated solely by selfish views. To set about driving them across the Bosphorus and Dardanelles would be to sound the trumpet of war in its shrillest notes, with the ultimate impossibility of replacing them on grounds of general interest." Lord Stratford foresaw the inevitable revival of the Eastern Question in the reckless extravagance of the Porte, even before bankruptcy and the first local disturbances in Herzegovina had kindled the fire already laid, and he would have had England sooner recognize what he considered the magnitude and extent of the danger. He would have had her at once take the central place among her co-signatories of the Treaty of Paris—she, who in his opinion, had most to lose and least to gain by the dissolution of the Ottoman

Empire—and fearlessly and uncompromisingly do that which in her lay to stop the evil, by right of her guarantee, which she was not justified in allowing to be unnecessarily imperilled, without effectual remonstrance. On the ground already occupied by England, Russia could not have found a footing, however eagerly she sought it.

His long experience had taught him that pressure, if steadily and properly applied to the Porte by a friendly Power—recognised as such by her—and more especially if supported by the rest of Europe, was always in the end successful. He never advocated force, and constantly insisted that you must give the Turk a loop-hole, for if you once got him with his back to the wall, he would fight to the very end. It was not to be, however, and when at last the country woke up to the gravity of the impending crisis, Turkey, dishonoured and disgraced, was already—whether for good or ill—in the gripe of her inveterate foe.

The papers are arranged numerically in order of their dates, from 1874 to 1880, the last having been written a few weeks before the author's death. They consist, partly, of memoranda hitherto unpublished, written either for the writer's own use or at the request of influential people seeking his opinion, and partly of the more public expression of his views, which appeared from time to time in the pages of a leading journal during those eventful years when, after lying dormant for so long, the Eastern Question

once more became the prominent feature in the history of European politics. Selections have necessarily been made, as many passages referred solely to events passing at the time, and could have no permanent interest. The volume concludes with several articles published during the last five years, and reprinted from the *Nineteenth Century Review* by kind permission of the Editor.

*December, 1880.*



# PART I.

## LETTERS AND MEMORANDA.

# THE EASTERN QUESTION.

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## I.

### TURKISH FINANCE.

[The following is a memorandum, now published for the first time, on the financial state of Turkey before she repudiated her debt.]

WRITTEN IN THE AUTUMN OF 1874.

THE financial state of the Turkish Empire is not alone interesting to those who have dividends to receive out of the Porte's revenue. The Governments of Christendom, the allied Powers, as the strongest of them are called, have no slight motives for keeping a watchful eye over it. England, in particular, is deeply concerned in its prosperity. It is very desirable for all that Turkey should not become the occasion of another European war. If there be any exception to this, it would be of one whose successes would be generally unpopular, and whose reverses could only be effected at a considerable cost of life and treasure. Three of the Allies have entered into a treaty by which they are engaged to maintain the integrity of the Turkish territory. This treaty bears the signatures of France and Austria, joined with that of England. Guarantees of this general kind are always open to criticism, and applied to the Turkish dominions, the policy of binding any country to a principle so eventually embarrassing is more than questionable.

However, be that as it may, we are thus bound ; and a contingency may occur which may oblige us either to shake off our responsibility in no very creditable manner, or to incur, without choice, an amount of sacrifice, equal at least, to that which attended the Crimean War. Supposing Russia, or Germany, or both, to attack or seriously to menace the independence of Turkey, we might not be able to achieve the same success, which twenty years ago, raised us to so commanding a position in the Conference at Paris. Instead of dictating, we might have to sue.

Now, weakness, whatever may be its cause, whether it spring from internal discord, or from a deficiency in the means of defence, is that condition of a state which especially provokes differences and invites hostility. Turkey has always, unhappily, the former source of weakness in her bosom, Greeks, Servians, Roumanians, Bulgarians, Armenians, Albanians, Bosnians and Montenegrins, whether subjects or recognizing the Sultan as their suzerain, look to some opportunity for asserting their independence. They can be easily kept down by the Ottoman authorities when the Porte is on terms of amity with the greater Powers, but they are dangerously explosive when they can hope for support from without. Add to this cause of weakness a state of finance unequal to the requirements of defence, and it is evident that the independence of Turkey must either be sacrificed, or rescued from ruin at the cost of one or all of its guaranteeing allies. Such being the case, it is equally manifest that England has a very deep interest in the healthy condition of Turkish finance.

Let us see how this matter stands at the present time. Anything but satisfactory in point of facts, anything but encouraging in point of opinion. The Turkish Budget presents a deficit of several millions sterling. The interest of loans and sinking funds together absorb the half or

nearly half, of the Porte's revenue, more money has to be borrowed in order to meet the year's demand, and it can only be obtained on very unfavourable terms. The wretched system of farming the revenue still continues. The population is generally on the decrease, and with it those productive elements which yield supplies to a treasury. To crown all, the Government has no regard for economy. Its purchases are carried beyond its means, and even beyond its wants. The Civil List, and the salaries and pensions of numerous officials are on far too high a scale.

The Turks, I doubt not, will pay the dividends on their loans as long as they can. Their good faith in that respect is seconded by their interest. They would not willingly incur discredit, and with it loss of sympathy on the part of Christendom. The danger lies in their increasing necessities. The Porte has lately made arrangements with the Ottoman Bank, which, if made in a right spirit and fairly carried out, may warrant a cautious renewal of confidence on the part of capitalists and shareholders. But this point does not appear to have been completely attained. Misgivings are still entertained in some observant quarters, and economy is not, as yet, the financial principle adopted at Constantinople.

It would thus appear that there is ample reason for inquiring whether the Turkish Government can without prejudice to its safety so far reduce its expenses as to avoid the impending danger. To form even an approximative judgment on this matter we must appeal in some measure to the past. About twenty years since, when Reschid Pasha was Grand Vizier, I went with him into an examination of the financial question in so far as the revenue of his Government was concerned. According to his statements the annual receipts of the treasury did not exceed seven millions and a half, or, at most, eight millions sterling. There was

a hope, he said, that they might be raised to another million in a year or two. At that period the Porte had not embarked in its present system of applying for loans to the European markets. Within the last two or three years the Turkish revenue has been proclaimed as amounting to twenty-one millions. There may be some exaggeration in this statement, but, I think, we may safely set down this *increase* at twelve millions. Now, what has happened politically to Turkey in the interval? First, the Crimean War, and then its termination by a general peace, which ever since, has enabled the Sultan to enjoy the blessings of quiet and security, with two or three very limited exceptions, at one time on the side of Candia, at another in Syria, and then again at Montenegro. During the same period large sums have been expended by the Sultan in building superfluous palaces, in purchasing huge iron-clads of little practical utility, and in making large additions to his army already sufficient for any immediate exigencies. The public debt has in consequence assumed by regular degrees its present gigantic proportions.

In this manner a precious space of time has been wasted on objects of little or no use, and productive only of future embarrassment and eventual peril. Is no stop to be put to this unwise and untimely extravagance? Has not Her Majesty's Government a right, in virtue of its guarantees, to require the effective adoption of a less reckless employment of their *protégé's* resources? Is it not their bounden duty to interfere, with or without their partners in the guaranty, for the purpose of preventing, before it be too late, a disaster involving the most serious responsibility?

If such were the view adopted by the British Cabinet, it may be expected that the Foreign Office would communicate with the French and Austrian Governments, though friendly suggestions might be at once conveyed, in a con-

fidential form, to the Sultan's ministers. Sooner or later it would surely be fair and expedient to intimate the right of the three allies to withdraw their guarantee if Turkey continued wantonly to incur the dangers inseparable from weakness and one of its primary causes, financial destitution. Let it be clearly understood that the question is purely political. Our peculiar relations with Turkey might indeed not improbably justify an exceptional interference on behalf of our numerous bond-holders. But that is not the matter in hand. A repetition of the Eastern Question, aggravated by its more immediate causes, and attended perhaps with peril, certainly with much cost, is the apprehension which has led to this memorandum being submitted to superior knowledge and sounder judgment than its author's. A lion, he knows, is in the path. A false sympathy might be created between Turkey and Russia, and the very mischief which a wholesome policy might be employed to prevent, would be fostered into vitality by the warmth of a flattering influence. It can hardly be denied that such a contingency is quite possible, but are we sure that the snake does not already occupy a place in the bosom of its dupe, and is the diplomacy of three great Powers so defective as to find no suitable means of counteracting the supposed evil?

At all events, a timely and well-conducted attempt to prevent an approaching danger, the reality and extent of which are matters of experience as well as of calculation, with right to warrant and duty to impose it, would, even if it proved unsuccessful, be creditable to the vigilance of Ministers, and turn aside any popular wish to fasten the responsibility on the Government.

## II.

### ENGLAND'S POLICY TOWARDS TURKEY.

[After the repudiation of her debt by Turkey, and the commencement of the insurrection in Herzegovina, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe addressed the following letter to the *Times*, in which he reviewed the general position of affairs. This letter will be found to have a direct application to many circumstances in the present condition of Turkey.]

DECEMBER 31ST, 1875.

THAT Turkey is weak, fanatical, and misgoverned no one can honestly deny; but to my apprehension it would be a great and hazardous mistake to infer from its condition in those respects that the best way for England is to leave it entirely alone.

Among the Turkish statesmen are some, at least, who in spite of their religious prejudices and defective knowledge, have sagacity enough to feel their wants, and prudence enough to bend rather than to break under the force of reasonable pressure. Nor are the Sultan's Mussulman subjects so unmanageable as to give serious alarm to his Government when reforms of an unpopular kind are to be carried into effect.

The Eastern question is a fact, a reality of indefinite duration. Like a volcano, it has intervals of rest; but its outbreaks are frequent, their occasions uncertain, and their effects destructive. The chief Powers of Christendom have all, more or less, an interest in the fortunes of an Empire which from being systematically aggressive has become a tottering and untoward neighbour. Its struggles for life, the agonies of its dissolution, could not fail to

throw all Europe into a state of hurtful agitation, if not into one of general hostilities. Ambitions, jealousies, apprehensions, and other conflicting passions would be roused into fearful activity, and the consequence of a fermentation so violent and extensive may well be dreaded.

Under these circumstances, for England to be an idle looker-on seems hardly credible. Such an attitude with reference to interests so positive and perils so imminent would be a virtual abdication of her high position and its attendant duties. True it is that of two evils she has only to choose the lesser, but the choice of either would be better than indifference alike degrading and dangerous.

War on one side, and an injurious dismemberment of Turkey on the other, may surely be avoided by British influence, exercised from a suitable position. The Treaty of Paris gives us the right of acting with the other parties to it wherever the affairs of Turkey are concerned. If the three Northern Powers are left to themselves, they will, of course, be guided by their own views. There is no reason to mistrust Russia at present; but Russia is, nevertheless, one of the same triumvirate which partitioned Poland, and the retirement of England might be taken as her opportunity.

The moral instance of England would in all likelihood be decisive in a conference of the five or the six Powers. Peace, the support of Turkey, its administrative, in particular its financial improvement, and the equality of all classes of its population, would naturally be the main points of her policy; nor is there ground for apprehending opposition to such principles on the part of others. The Sultan, moreover, would be more likely to assent to measures necessary to secure the execution of reforms when proposed to him by all the Powers and recommended by England whose counsels have always had a defensive or conservative character,—defensive as to the Danube and the Bosphorus,



conservative as to the only feasible prolongation of Turkey's political existence.

Objections may be taken to the necessary measures, but their character of necessity makes them part of the lesser evil, and therefore to be accepted with it.

The measures in question are a superintendence of mixed organization internally, and a joint conventional pressure from without. The difficulties of this twofold arrangement would be far from insuperable, and the inconveniences would be compensated by the result.

These measures, reduced to a system, would doubtless amount to tutelage; but the Turkish Empire has long been virtually in that state, which, if it had been steadily as of right enforced, would have saved the Porte from its present embarrassments. No good end is to be attained by under-rating either the resources of the Turkish Empire, or the faculty of its Government to meet the fair demands of the Christian Powers and to remove the grievances of its Christian subjects. But there is an evident want of foreign intercourse to enlighten the native classes, of foreign co-operation to give a right shape to practical reforms, and, above all, of a sustained influence not to be trifled with on the part of friendly Governments.

Stress has been laid in some newspaper articles on that clause in the Treaty of Paris which has an air of binding the Powers to abstain from interfering in the internal affairs of Turkey. But the engagement is, in truth, limited and conditional. The Christian plenipotentiaries promised only that the communication of the Sultan's reforms should not be held to warrant such interference. But other rights to interfere belong to the Powers, especially to those who either sided with the Porte in a moral sense, or spent their money and shed their blood for the Sultan's cause in the Crimean War. The engagement, taken in its fullest inter-

pretation, moreover, was an act of reliance on the Sultan's honour, and, consequently, resumable on the failure of that counterpledge. By the Treaty of Paris the Porte was admitted into the community of European States, and the table of reforms—which, by the way, was framed by the Ambassadors in conference with the Turkish Ministers at Constantinople—obtained a place in the Treaty as proof of the practical effect of that admission.

In a religious sense no Christian can sympathise with a Mussulman Government. It is on very different grounds that the Porte enlists on its side the good will of some and the forbearance of all the European Powers. Their interference to the degree and in the manner proposed has no other object but that of saving Europe at large from a general war, and some of its States from the injurious effects of a rival's special aggrandizement; but the welfare of Turkey, as now circumstanced, would be a natural accompaniment of the plan herein suggested, and those who recommend it are the best friends of that Empire.

### III.

## THE TRUE MEANING OF THE EASTERN QUESTION.

[In May, 1876, Lord Statford de Redcliffe presented through the *Times* the following review of the circumstances which had given the Eastern Question its great importance in Europe, and suggested a scheme of reform which the writer deemed essential to the administration of the Sultan's dominions. The letter contains, in a short compass, a history of the Eastern Question, and an explanation of its bearings upon the general affairs of Europe.]

MAY 16, 1876.

By far the greater part of a year has elapsed since the Christian insurrection in Turkey broke out, and it continues still to be the chief object of political interest in European politics. Well it may, for the attempts to settle it have increased its difficulties and given it a character which more than ever threatens to disturb the general peace. So rapid has been the growth of disease compared with the slowness of treatment, that the dwarf of yesterday may be said to have become the giant of to-day. By the Press at least, and particularly by the British portion of it, the real importance of the movement in Herzegovina is now, after much hesitation, acknowledged. Even in your paramount journal, articles have lately appeared under the head—a most significant title—of the “Eastern Question.” The mediating Powers may have their reasons for not facing openly and at once the Frankenstein who now challenges their interference; but facts are stubborn, and the awakened intelligence of millions will finally leave them no choice but that of a commanding action in some effective shape.

At this point it may be useful to describe briefly, in clear

terms, the real character and importance of the "~~Eastern~~ Question." In a loose and general sense its meaning is obvious enough to all who have in any degree the habit of discoursing on political topics. But few, perhaps, even in the circle of statesmen, have had occasion or taken pains to ascertain the whole of its constituent elements, and the full extent of its bearing on European and, in particular, on British interests. For the origin and very roots of the question we must refer to the character of the Turks as a race, to the principles of their peculiar religion, and to the manner in which they got possession of their dominions to the west of those waters which separate Europe from Asia. To their Tartar blood they are indebted for the despotic temper which facilitates the exercise of their power, but tends to shorten its duration. Their administrative institutions are based on a creed the principles of which, in their nature unchangeable, obstruct the progress of that social development by which nations increase their strength and secure the respect of their neighbours. Their fanaticism impelled them to conquest; their despotism enabled them to hold the conquered in subjection; but the effect of these two principles was to keep them in a state of isolation as to countries not yet brought under their yoke, and of utter antagonism with a large majority of their fellow subjects. Moreover, they brought their Asiatic manners into the part of Europe they subdued as an additional cause of alienation from all but their followers in religion. Their acquisition of the Sultan's present dominions in Europe was, no doubt, the work of time; but there can be little room for error in stating that throughout their period of successive conquests, however on occasions the outward appearances may have varied, their motives of aggression and principles of government were essentially the same.

With Turk, as with Christian, Pagan, or Jew, fanaticism will excite hostility, and the evils of misgovernment will sooner or later work the ruin of an empire. History confirms the truth of this remark. Six centuries of dominion did not prevent the final expulsion of the Moors from Spain. Turkey, from being an aggressive and conquering power, dropped gradually into a state of self-defence and internal anarchy. The decline of that Empire may be dated from after the failure of Sultan Soliman's gigantic expedition against Vienna. Although it was checkered at first by occasional exceptions, another century had scarcely elapsed before the downward movement went on more rapidly, and to judge from present appearances it has not yet slackened its pace.

While the enervating effects of the Turkish system told with growing power on the resources of the Empire, those bordering Powers who either were most molested by its ambition, or found most reason to reckon on profiting by its decay, had gathered fresh strength from their superior knowledge and sounder principles of administration. To a larger increase of their subjects they added a greater development of industry, a wiser management of their finances, and a healthier progress in secular instruction and military discipline. At the same time the Rayahs, that oppressed and naturally disaffected portion of the Sultan's subjects, had largely advanced in numbers, knowledge, wealth, the sense of degradation, and the consciousness of growth. So long as the Porte contended singly with Austria or Russia, war after war terminated in treaties adverse to Turkish interests. At one time it was an actual cession of territory, at another the elevation of some Ottoman Province into a tributary state approaching to independence. It was not only to the final ascendancy of Turkey that the battle of Lepanto gave an incurable blow. Hungary, the Crimea,

Bessarabia, and all Turkey north of the rivers Pruth and Phasis ceased to be part of its Empire, while the Danubian Provinces and Servia obtained, under Russian protection, privileges bordering on political separation. More than all this, Egypt fell off from the immediate government of the Sultan, Greece with its adjacent islands became an independent monarchy, and the small but renowned Isle of Samos, though close upon the coast of Asia, received a charter of autonomy. By way of compensation for these losses the Imperial Government shook off a variety of encroachments which had gradually weakened its authority, and a policy of useful reform, commenced for military progress by Sultan Selim, was proclaimed by Mahmoud, and in part realized by that energetic sovereign. The Janissaries were exterminated, a regular army was created, the poll-tax levied on Rayahs was suppressed, the provincial Pashas were shorn of their much-abused powers, the Déré Beys, or landowners in fee, were brought into a more complete subordination, and, in general, life and property were in some degree freed from the assaults of arbitrary caprice. Enough of evil still remained both in practice and principle to obstruct the recovery of Turkish power. Disunion, ignorance, corruption, a debased coinage, a diminishing population, and financial mismanagement, could hardly fail to nourish, if not to increase, the weakness originating in causes less capable of correction. Events, of which some witnesses may still survive, showed to demonstration nearly 100 years ago that the Porte had ceased to be an independent power in the full sense of that term. She owed the recovery of Egypt from French occupation to the arms of England by land and sea; within ten years from that time, if she withstood the menace of a British squadron at Constantinople, her courage was derived from the inspiration of a foreign Ambassador, and her peace with Russia not long

after took from British mediation whatever advantage it possessed. Such, in more recent years, was the dependence of Turkey on Christendom that a Russian navy was admitted into the Bosphorus for its protection from the forces of Mahomet Ali, a provincial pasha; that, under changed circumstances, its capital was saved from capture by a disastrous Treaty; and that its independence was subsequently maintained by the joint battalions of France and England.

The Treaty concluded at Paris twenty years ago not only abated the pretensions of Russia, but gave a more settled character to the Turk's relation with Christendom as initiated by the Crimean War. To use a French expression, the Porte then took its place in the family of European Powers, and an improved charter of reforms, having the two-fold object of a better treatment of the Rayahs, and the adoption of sounder principles of Government in Turkey, was held to justify its admittance to that position. The charter subsequently proclaimed by Sultan Abdul-Medjid had been prepared at Constantinople by a joint conference of Turkish Ministers and European Ambassadors assembled at the British residence, and was made part of the general act of pacification under an agreement that its insertion in the Treaty should not be made a pretext for the interference of any foreign Power in the internal affairs of Turkey. England, at the same time, in conjunction with France and Austria, guaranteed in form the integrity of the Ottoman dominions, and also guaranteed, together with France, the first or second loan contracted abroad by the Ottoman Court. These transactions represent what was meant to be a fixed policy,—on the part of Turkey the support of Powers strong enough to protect, on the part of such Powers restraint of individual ambition and preservation of peace.

It is not an idle curiosity which seeks to know in what degree the policy thus expressed has answered its intended purposes. With few exceptions of no great importance, the Turkish Empire has enjoyed since the Crimean War a period of unruffled tranquillity within, and of total cessation of danger from without. The Sultan's allies have invariably maintained a friendly attitude. The Syrian disturbance was calmed with aid of British concurrence. Montenegro, unassisted by Russia, was left to an unequal contest with the disciplined legions of Omer Pasha. Greece in its attempt to detach Candia from the Ottoman Empire received no countenance from any Christian State. Though Russia consulted her own exclusive interests in breaking loose from the Black Sea Clause of the Treaty, the impatience of a first-rate Power, under the indefinite pressure of so humiliating a yoke, was too natural to warrant the suspicion of any ulterior designs.

Have the immense advantages of a period thus characterized been turned to account by Turkish statesmen or their Sovereign? The answer required by truth is not satisfactory. Their vast Empire exhibits no signs of real improvement. Its revenue is, indeed, more than doubled since the war; but a debt, which may be stated in round figures at £200,000,000, weighs hard upon its amount, and the bondholders look in vain for their dividends. The promised reforms have not been wholly neglected, but the pledge so solemnly given at Paris has been by no means redeemed, and the consequences are insurrection in one quarter and sour discontent together with revengeful mistrust throughout the Empire. Instead of economy (that basis of national strength), a reckless extravagance has prevailed. Superfluous buildings are in course of construction at ruinous cost, and railways offering small prospects of remuneration have been undertaken; ironclads requiring



for their management a skill which is not forthcoming have been purchased; the army has been carried to a figure which exceeds the faculty of payment; and, to crown all, the salaries and pensions assigned respectively to active or retired officials are enormously disproportioned to the financial means of the State.

What are the consequences—the immediate perilous consequences—of these follies and delinquencies? Why, nothing less than Imperial bankruptcy in Turkey (at least, for the time), a destructive, though partial, insurrection, a general inquietude, the interference of foreign dictators, and the danger of extensive hostilities, involving, perhaps, the greater part of Europe.

Each and all of these effects are more or less deplorable. They suggest two other points of inquiry. Could they have been prevented? Can they now be remedied?

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It would seem a matter of conjecture that the Governments who ratified the Treaty of Paris must, if properly served, have been seasonably apprised of the reckless manner in which the Porte was acting, and that their urgent, but forcible warnings would have carried weight enough to check so fatal a career. However the case may be in those respects, the mischief which it was natural to apprehend exists in part, and that part threatens to quicken into larger proportions. The first attempt from without to restore peace in the insurgent districts, if present appearances may be trusted, has signally failed. The six Powers who, with shades of difference, took part in the recent mediation are supposed to be still engaged in consultation as to the expediency of further proceedings.

With a hope that England will now at length take a more decided part in the Conference, and that the Conference, enlightened by recent experience, will extend its views to

the full range of that question of which the Slavonian insurrection is only a fragmentary exponent, I shrink not from placing on record an outline of such remedial measures as in my judgment offer the only prospect of bringing the Eastern difficulty to a peaceful solution. The remedies must, of course, be equal to the wants. Where there is weakness there must be support. Where confidence within is exhausted securities must be called in from without. When the habits of administration are shown by experience to be pernicious, safety must be sought in principles of a sounder kind. The pride of national independence must, for the time, give way to considerations of welfare and necessity; above all, the means—the financial means—of a State's vitality must be obtained from their only legitimate sources—industry, credit, and economy.

Hence the first point to be established is equality of all classes before the civil law.

The next is reform of the fiscal administration.

Thirdly, the admission of all subjects into the Army, with the exemption from actual service on payment of a regulated war-tax, the *haratch* being in all cases for ever abolished.

Fourthly, the Council of State and all other secular councils, whether in the capital or in the Provinces, to be composed in due parts of Christian and other non-Mussulman subjects.

Fifthly, the formal recognition of religious freedom, so that not only public worship and religious edifices are secured from interruption of any kind, but also that no individual or individuals whosoever shall be molested on account of the religion they profess.

Sixthly, that no suffering or forfeiture shall be inflicted without the sanction and due process of law established before the commission of the offence in question.

Seventhly, the establishment of a Board of Trade, the

number of whose members shall include, in fair proportion, foreigners as well as Mussulmans, and other subjects of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan.

Eighthly, that the preceding articles shall be made the subject matter of a convention between the Sultan and his Allies, the Mediating Powers ; and the effective execution of the same be placed under the superintendence of a mixed, responsible Commission.

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Objections, however, may be taken to a plan of settlement comprising so much sacrifice of habitual thought and departure from rooted practice on the part of Turkey and on that of its Christian allies so much inconvenient trouble and complicated machinery. Doubts may also be entertained as to the right of foreign Governments to carry their interference beyond the line of earnest persuasion or urgent remonstrance. Unquestionably, however, these are means to be employed, if at all, in the first instance. The terms suggested above may be worked into a more practicable shape without ceasing to be efficient. Failure of the experiment would no more close the door against a stronger pressure than the refusal of Austria's terms by the Insurgents has done. Proceedings of a more effective kind might, indeed, be warranted by considerations which can hardly be overlooked with prudence or safety. Their objects would be the maintenance of peace, the correction of pernicious abuses, the rescue of millions from injustice and degradation, the retention by Turkey of as much sovereign and national individuality as circumstances originating from itself allow it to enjoy. If something more positive in point of right is required, we must take into account the Porte's unfulfilled engagements, the services attended with much cost of life and treasure which the Allies, or some of them at least, have rendered in recent times to its Empire, and

the sacrifices which they are still eventually bound to make on its behalf. It would surely be a crying scandal for Christendom if the Turks, who effected their conquests in the name of religion, were left to endanger the peace of Europe, and to oppress a numerous population of Christians, deriving their ability to do so from the wealth of Christian countries and the indifference, not to say complicity, of Christian Governments. Apprehensions are entertained by some that the Sultan, if pressed too closely by the Allies, might have recourse to the religious feeling of his Mussulman subjects and thereby get up a fanatical rising of the masses. Such a resistance is, no doubt, possible, but it would be full of danger to the Turks themselves, and the experience of a century, which has been marked by events destructive of Turkish ascendancy, encourages a very different expectation.

Let it not be forgotten that the actual position of Turkey is one of dependence amounting virtually to tutelage displayed unmistakably from time to time; that the Powers who have opened a mediation between the Sultan and his insurgent subjects must either give a stronger tone to their interference or fall back into a state of inaction; that such interference ending in smoke would be no less fatal to its objects than inaction itself, and that to join in forcing the Insurgents into submission is an extremity not to be supposed.

It is obvious that where there is only a choice of evils, the adoption of the least is what may be fairly termed a necessity.

If the plan suggested herein, whether modified or not, were deemed after due reflection on any account inadmissible, the great interests involved in the Eastern Question, and those of England in particular, would never cease to engage the attention of Statesmen, and at times to un-

settle the most peaceful relations. The command of the Suez Canal may go far to secure our communications with India, but we should have ample reasons for regretting the transfer of Constantinople from its present occupants to those who will have the best chance of being their successors. The vast basin of productive countries, to which the Bosphorus and Dardanelles are open outlets, could not be closed without commensurate injury to our commerce and influence; it could not be held by any Power jealous of its advantages without giving a very precarious character to our positions in the Levant.

A hint of some arrangement, if not more agreeable to the Porte, at least more decidedly remedial, has been thrown out quite recently by the public Press. It was even described as likely to become an object of discussion at Berlin on the occasion of the Russian Emperor's visit to that capital. Herzegovina and Bosnia might, indeed, be put into a state of vassalage to the Sultan, similar to that in which Servia stands. A belt of such principalities, including Moldavia, Walachia, and Montenegro, interposed between Russia and Austria on the one side and Turkey on the other, might operate as a protection to the Ottoman dominion in Europe and a pledge of durable peace in that quarter. In fairness to the Turkish proprietors, facilities would have to be given for the settlement elsewhere of such of them as chose to emigrate and for the sale of their lands and houses. On the other hand, the Sultan's concession would carry with it a just claim for tribute from the emancipated Provinces, and they, while entitled to the Porte's protection, would be secured against the entrance of Turkish troops, except on the request, in due form, of the provincial authorities. Arrangements of this kind are by no means unprecedented even now in the annals of Turkey. To go

no further, Mahomedan Egypt, as every one knows, is tributary to the Sultan ; and in Mahmoud's reign, not half a century ago, a very considerable tract of land was ceded to Greece for a sum of money by no means equal to its value.

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STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE.

## IV.

### THE GREAT POWERS AND THE PORTE.

[This letter was addressed to the *Times* in September, 1876, when Servia, worsted in her contest with the Porte, had appealed to the Powers for mediation. In this letter also will be found reflections and suggestions which are not less applicable to the state of Turkey now than they were four years ago.]

SEPTEMBER 9TH, 1876.

THE Eastern Question has by degrees assumed such large proportions that no one can be surprised at the space it occupies in all public discussions, whether of the tongue or of the pen. The special interest which circumstances of the past engage me to take in its solution will, I hope, induce you to receive with indulgence some further remarks of mine on that subject; shown, as it now is, to be pregnant with the most perilous consequences. Little more than a year has elapsed since the insurrection in European Turkey was confined to one small province bordering on the Austrian dominions. Those who, like myself, had been personally long mixed up with Levantine affairs could hardly fail to detect in that very limited disturbance a principle of growth which threatened to give it an extension fatal to the peace of other and distant countries. Even the three Northern Emperors, from whom proceeded the Andrassy Note, and whose chief motive of interference would seem to have been Austrian, gave a general character to the demand of reforms which they addressed to the Ottoman Government. What in the beginning was an impulse of reasonable foresight is now proved to have been a just apprehension of consequences more than probable. It is worth while to bear this in mind

at the present crisis, because it tends to strengthen the opinion which, however salutary, is still fluctuating, that the mediation solicited by Servia should be undertaken with views of conclusive meaning, and every appliance required to secure an adequate result.

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Whatever may be the issue of prolonged hostilities in Turkey, the difficulty of reconciling the parties engaged in them must evidently be great. The proud habit of command on one side, and the natural love of independence on the other, would in any case dispose them to keep apart. To overcome this unavoidable tendency, there must of necessity be a pressure from without superior to the resistance from within.

What should be the form and character of that pressure is a point requiring the earliest consideration. But it is not the only one. The terms of pacification, the constitutional and administrative reforms to be urged upon the Porte, and the securities required for their execution, are also matters which demand immediate attention, and, if possible, a preliminary agreement on the part of the mediators. The choice of agents fitted for their work by energy as well as capacity is too obvious to need any special suggestion. Some few words on each of the preceding points will suffice for my present purpose.

A well-known proverb tells us that "union is force." Why should not this maxim guide our counsels now? Granted that we may fairly flatter ourselves with the belief that the Sultan's Government give us a larger share of their confidence than to any other Christian Power. But such confidence does not of itself go to the extent of taking advice which recommends sacrifices of a painful, or even unusual, nature, however indispensable. Mediation carried on by the six Christian Powers which were parties to the Treaty of Paris



would naturally make an impression far other than that of advice tendered by one friendly Government, even with the utmost degree of truth and earnestness. A truism such as this speaks for itself. It only remains to inquire whether, in the present case, a combination of this kind is morally just and practically attainable. To me it appears to be both. Good motives, useful objects, apposite circumstances, and rights derived from treaty, operating together, must surely be allowed to warrant a concurrent action on the part of those who have in common a crying evil to suppress or prevent. The Powers whose mediation is expected have all, more or less, an interest in stamping out the war and enforcing the acceptance of terms calculated to last.

So much to show that the combination in question would be just. That it might be realized without difficulty, if it be not concerted already, admits of little doubt. The Andrassy Note was sanctioned and recommended by the six Powers, and the refusal of England to back the Berlin proposals had for its effect a general sense of the inefficiency caused by a want of union. Even the language of Lord Derby in reply to Mr. Bright and his associates not only gave proof of his opinion that a mediation would sooner or later be required, but described the several Powers who might take part in it as affording no marked reason for suspecting them of views irreconcilable with ours.

Whatever grounds of antipathy may exist between the Turks and Servians, originating in differences of faith, of race, or of policy, and however they may account for the present hostilities, it must be admitted that the invasion of Turkey by its Tributary was a measure unauthorized by the practice of civilized nations. Here, no doubt, is a notable difficulty in settling the terms of peace, especially if the offensive party should be entirely overpowered. There are, nevertheless, considerations of no mean importance, which

naturally and reasonably ought to operate for the protection of the Principalities, should they be irrecoverably defeated. They could not but sympathize with their fellow Slavonians in Herzegovina. It was natural for them to cherish the hope not only of sympathy, but eventually of succour for themselves from a quarter abounding far more in auxiliary resources. Though living under their own laws, they had still to pay tribute to their old oppressors. If they were also animated by motives of territorial interest, they were at the same time exasperated by the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria, and we must remember that the youthful Prince, who led his countrymen across the frontier, was impelled by a popular enthusiasm which he could not resist without the most imminent danger to his Throne and personal means of existence. It is next to impossible that the Powers of Christendom can permit the Turk, however triumphant, to cast his yoke again over the necks of any emancipated Provincials. The Servians themselves may be deficient in civilization as affecting the principles or practice of governments and the imperative duties of humanity; but their defects of administration are softened by the profession of Christianity, and their occasional excesses are more the acts of individual impulse than the consequences of an established system. There is much reason to think that a chain of autonomous States, though still, perhaps, tributary to the Sultan, might be extended from the Black Sea to the Adriatic with advantage to that potentate himself. But, at all events, the very idea of reinstating any amount of Turkish misgovernment in places once cleared of it is simply revolting.

As we are now supposing the Porte to be victorious, we cannot in fairness lose sight of those circumstances whence it has derived the means of victory, and whence, if not controlled, it may hope to enjoy a harvest reaped by its

unsparing sword. Millions on millions extracted from the moneyed classes of Christendom since the Crimean War have enabled it to form those numerous battalions which are now in the fields of slaughter, and promises of reform proclaimed by authority and recorded in treaty have obtained for it the countenance and friendly protection of its Christian allies, on credit of performances hitherto but faintly and partially realized. Do not these undeniable facts confer a right—nay, even impose a duty of mediating with a firm resolution to carry into full effect the dictates of humanity and the principles of equitable government?

These ends being suitably provided for, what lover of peace, what friend to a state of occupation favourable to commerce and other European interests, would seek to disturb the actual possessors of Constantinople and its dependent Straits?

Whatever conventional terms may be the result of mediation, it is clear that they will be of little value unless their execution be secured by something more effective than mere Turkish authority. Experience proves the necessity of this precaution. Not that I would accuse either the Sultan, whoever he may be, or his Ministers of wilful insincerity. They are more to be pitied for weakness caused by their education and Constitutional position than censured for want of faith.

Tutored as the Turks have been from time to time during the whole century, they are still averse from foreign interference, and therefore it is that the present necessity should be brought home to their understanding in the most considerate manner, consistent with insuring a just appreciation of the truth. It were well that the terms of agreement should be fixed and limited by a convention. A mixed commission of members, appointed by the several parties, might be intrusted with the duty of superintending the

execution of reforms and reporting to their respective Governments. The Convention would, no doubt, be more palatable to the Porte if it were made subject to extinction or renewal at the end, say, of 12 or 15 years.

Such are the principal points susceptible of being stated by anticipation. There are others, of course, but they are secondary, and, therefore, may be left with safety and convenience to subsequent arrangement.

It stands to reason that for mediation of this kind a thorough understanding should be previously established among the Powers who take part in it, and the form of proceeding best suited to this purpose can hardly be other than that of a Convention. A form of agreement so positive would by no means preclude the use of identical notes, presented to the Porte separately by each of the allied mediators, who, if they came to act ostensibly in concert, would expose themselves to the annoyance of having their communications rejected on grounds of diplomatic etiquette.

It is to be hoped that the concerted action of the six Powers, if indeed they are now all acting together, will continue, that the atrocities perpetrated in Bulgaria will not be lost sight of, and that an European mediation, whether now or hereafter, will embrace the Eastern Question in its full extent. Peace, no doubt, is the foremost object, but peace to be durable must rest on terms applied to the primary as well as to the immediate cause of war. The difficulties of negotiating may be thereby increased to such a degree as to make a certain though less solid arrangement preferable. But in any case there must be difficulties which are capable of yielding to pressure judiciously and resolutely applied. The greatest, when ultimately overcome, would find their recompense in the result—namely, the suspension for a long term of years, if not the final

settlement, of that question which now, with few exceptions, agitates alike the feeling and the thinking world.

Our national hatred of cruelty is now finding vent in various effusions of writing and speech. Crimes that shock human feeling are always liable to be stated with exaggeration, and acts of brutality are but too likely to lie at the door of each party engaged in extreme contention. Even the present burst of indignation may easily run into excess. But official reports show that there is really matter enough for general reprobation. The public expression of it, however, to prove remedial, should be temperate, the offspring of reason rather than of passion.

I do not wish to pass my opinions for more than they are worth ; what I have at heart is to make them clear. The sum of them is to close the war in Turkey by a peace which would leave the Turks at Constantinople under terms of agreement with the great Powers of Christendom—terms confirming the autonomy of the tributary Principalities, extending to the Empire at large the reforms recognized as necessary for its government on sounder principles of administration, together with the equitable treatment of all classes of its subjects, and, lastly, establishing securities for a faithful execution of the settlement in all its parts. I must conclude with a word of regret that the confidence which to all appearances we are now placing in the other parties to our mediation was not employed from the beginning to put England in her right position at their side.

## V.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF THE EASTERN DIFFICULTY.

[The following memorandum was written about the same time as the preceding letter, and is therefore inserted here. It has not hitherto been published.]

NOVEMBER, 1876.

As it has come to my knowledge that persons, who approve my opinions on the Eastern Question, entertain serious doubts of their practicability, I hold it a duty at the present momentous crisis to draw up a fuller statement of the proceedings which seem to me best calculated to effect the desired settlement. The difficulties are great, but not, I trust, insuperable. The results in view are certainly far greater still. The first essential step is obviously a conference with, or which might be better, without the Porte. Equally indispensable is a *Formal Convention* between the Six Christian Powers signatories of the general treaty concluded at Paris in 1856. The Powers should declare by such instrument the reasons of their interference, its ultimate objects, and the principal measures required to realize them. The objects in question are these: 1. Restoration of peace on durable grounds in the disturbed Turkish Provinces; 2. The territorial *status quo* of Turkey under the Sultan's sovereignty, and 3. The reform, with efficient securities, of its administrative system on sound and equitable principles.

The next progressive move should be a *Capitulation* or *Treaty* between the Porte and the Six Powers, each and all, the Porte thereby agreeing in definite, binding terms to

establish forthwith a Commission, composed, in certain proportions, of the Sultan's Mussulman and non-Mussulman subjects, together with foreigners, and empowered to frame and carry into lasting effect the prescribed reforms.

Let the *President of the Commission* be appointed by the Sultan, and have two lateral advisers named, or at least approved by the Christian Powers in some manner previously agreed upon.

*Foreign Members* of the Commission to be appointed and replaced when necessary by the several Christian Powers, to whom they would have to report and to be entirely amenable.

*Cases of difference* when arising among the members of the Commission to be referred to the High Contracting Parties.

Provision to be made against *unnecessary delays* by rendering those who are convicted of causing them personally responsible. A special committee might be charged with this judicial duty.

The *local application of reforms* can only be effected by joint special agents, Turk and Christian, under the supervision of an officer (consul or agent) representing the Christian Powers, and authorised to act in concert with local councils, or other recognised parties immediately concerned.

These requirements, though meant to be temporary, must of course be allowed sufficient time for planting and taking root.

Some mode of meeting the requisite outlay must be settled by previous agreement.

In some districts local peculiarities will require a modification of general rules.

Agents at a distance from the capital will have need of armed protection by a police or military force.

Any indispensable occupation of Turkish territory by foreigners must be strictly limited as to force, time, and duty.

N.B.—The terms proposed by Lord Derby, and accepted with some point of difference by Russia, are supposed to form the basis of settlement in the five disturbed provinces of European Turkey.

Of those reforms which extend throughout the Empire my suggestions, as published from time to time, may be borne in mind as an approximate, if not a complete, summary.

The Porte can hardly be expected to consent to the preceding stipulations, unless a *sense of necessity* is made to pervade her counsels in virtue of settled resolutions from without.



## VI.

### TERMS OF PEACE.

[After the capture of the Schipka Pass by the Russian army, the terms on which a peace between Russia and Turkey might be based, were thus considered in a letter to the *Times*.]

JANUARY 15, 1878.

THE great question which has occupied Europe so long is now approaching, if it has not already reached, a point at which all mystery and reserve must be thrown aside. Fact must take the place of conjecture, and Cabinets must open their doors to the rush of public anxiety. After much discouragement, the Russians are riding on the tide of victory; the Turks are preparing to sue for peace; the neutral Powers, with the exception of England, show no inclination to move; and England, as far as we know, confines herself to a faint overture which finds no favour with the Russian authorities. Russia has declared herself willing to make peace, but only by direct and separate negotiation with the Turks. In these circumstances the question which presses for solution on the parties to the Treaty of Paris, and more particularly, perhaps, on England, is this:—Which of two courses is preferable—namely, by some diplomatic declaration, single or combined, to draw the line which Russia will not be allowed to pass without remonstrance, or to wait in silent but watchful neutrality until the Russian conditions of peace are brought unmistakably to light?

\* \* \* \* \*

A direct negotiation between the belligerents has necessarily the effect of giving the stronger of the two parties

an advantage over the weaker. It is now more than probable that the military position will exercise an overpowering influence on the discussions. Even the general desire for peace is unfavourable to Turkey, whose Government is ready to catch at any, the most slender, hope of obtaining assistance or encouragement from without. On the other hand, there is now a better prospect of concert among the neutral Powers, and the Treaty of Paris is less exposed to the risk of total neglect. There is dignity and an element of success in affording the Emperor of Russia an opportunity of displaying his regard for antecedent declarations by an impulse of honourable feeling.

What remains of the Treaty after its partial alteration in March, 1871, taken in connection with those Imperial declarations, narrows very considerably the range of such conditions as military triumphs might entitle Russia to impose upon the Porte. The Treaty of that date expressly renews and confirms every part of the Treaty of Peace concluded at Paris in the year 1856, except those which are annulled or modified by the subsequent Treaty of 1871. The only article of this Treaty which has to be noticed here is the second, which stipulates that the Sultan shall be at liberty to open the Bosphorus and Dardanelles in time of peace to the vessels of war of friendly and allied Powers, in case the Sublime Porte should judge it necessary in order to secure the execution of the stipulations of the Treaty of Paris of March 30, 1856. This last mentioned Treaty contains in its seventh article the following clause:—"Their Majesties engage, each on his part, to respect the independence and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, guarantee in common the strict observance of that engagement, and will in consequence consider any act tending to its violation as a question of general interest." Language clearer or stronger than this it would be difficult to find elsewhere. Its general

result is that the Powers, including Russia, guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and that the sole discretion assigned to the Sultan with respect to opening the Bosphorus and Dardanelles to foreign ships of war is limited by a special motive—namely, to secure the execution of the Treaty.

To show that Russia is also restrained by its own declarations, it is enough to refer to Prince Gortchakoff's despatch of the 18th of May, 1877, O.S., addressed to the Russian Ambassador in London, and communicated by his Excellency to the Earl of Derby. According to the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th paragraphs of the despatch in question Russia renounces every intention of meddling with the Suez Canal or Egypt, or acquiring the city of Constantinople, or dealing exclusively with the Straits. A similar assurance is given with respect to India. The whole engagement is made to turn upon the continued neutrality of England, which exists up to the present time and depends for its continuance throughout the war on England's own will.

Consistently with this double source of limitation, the Russians can do little more than stipulate for the autonomy or independence of the several Provinces forming the whole line of the Turkish frontier territory from the Black Sea to the Adriatic. The declared object of the war was to obtain relief from Turkish misrule on behalf of Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, and in that manner to relieve Europe from the constant anxieties and often-recurring disturbances of the Eastern Question. England has nothing to apprehend from the execution of such a scheme, except in so far as Bulgaria is concerned, and that only by means of the approximation of Russian influence to the central seat of Turkish authority. England, indeed, as a Christian and Constitutional Power, might be expected to look with favour on such an act of emancipation, though tainted by a suspicion

of having for its origin some motives less pure than those of simple humanity and religious zeal, the more so as the part she took in the Stamboul Conference pointed substantially to that end. The main difficulty lies with Bulgaria; but might not the objection founded on the independence of that Province be greatly softened down, if not entirely removed, by assigning to Roumania that portion of it which lies between the Danube and the Balkans, and giving to its remaining and larger parts a system of autonomy sufficient to secure them from the evils of Mussulman administration? It can hardly be doubted that Servia and Montenegro, as well as Roumania, look to Russia for their respective shares of profit at the expense of Turkey. But whatever opinion may be entertained by statesmen in general of the conduct exhibited by those communities towards the Porte, an expression of blame or a passing remonstrance is the very utmost that the sense of justice could reasonably prescribe to the Ministry or Parliament of England.

Granting that Russia, according to the practice of nations at every period, is entitled to extend her conditions in some degree to compensation for the cost and sacrifices of war, the field which at all lies open to her for that purpose is by no means extensive. Money may be put out of count in the present state of Ottoman finance. Land on a considerable scale could not well be demanded without a breach of Treaty engagements. Territory conquered and actually occupied by Muscovite troops in Armenia is the most obvious element of indemnity still accessible without discredit to Russia. A free passage by ships of war from the Black Sea to the Archipelago may be added conditionally, though not perhaps without the consent, or at least the acquiescence, of Powers now at peace. The original right of exclusiveness belonging to the Sultan has been restricted, as every one knows,

by Treaty, and a new arrangement more favourable to Russian interests might be made, though hardly without the concurrence of other States. It is quite natural for Russia to seek a free passage for her ships of war by the Bosphorus. She may fairly entertain the wish without having any sinister or ambitious design in view. The great objection to her enjoyment of the privilege is the position of Constantinople on the shores of the Strait. Nothing short of extreme weakness could justify the Government which made a concession so fraught with peril to the very heart of its Empire. Palliatives might nevertheless be used with salutary effect. One or at most two armed vessels of commanding size might be allowed to pass from time to time, and the Power whose flag was concerned might be bound to give notice some days before of their intended passage, and in such manner that no accumulation of admitted vessels should occur. There would still be the inconvenience of a Russian Squadron in the Archipelago or Mediterranean. This, from the English point of view, would certainly not be desirable; but so long as the British Navy maintains its present superiority, what more should we have to endure than some additional expense, and the regret of having made over the Ionian Islands to Greece?

A word remains to be said on the subject of territorial acquisitions in Armenia. It is not impossible that Russia may have made such progress in that country as to negotiate for peace while in actual possession of the whole region between Erzeroum and Bayazid, including Kars and Batoum, together with the head waters of the Euphrates. That she would thereby acquire the means of assailing our Indian possessions with success may well be doubted, but a considerable increase of her influence in Asia Minor, over Persia and the Black Sea, would in all likelihood accrue to her. Whether our interests would be thereby compromised

to a degree requiring the last appeal for their protection rests on no private judgment to decide. I would only ask whether the Emperor of Russia could push his demands to such an extent with any pretence of justice, consistency, or reason. He is bound by Treaty, in concert with other potentates, to respect "the independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire." He was the aggressor; the Turks are acting on the defensive. The Russian disasters had their origin at home; the Turkish sacrifices go to the point of exhaustion; they have placed their Christian fellow-subjects on the same level with themselves. Whatever their errors may have been, they have paid the penalty, and now only afford their conqueror a good occasion of shedding on the triumph of his arms the glorious light of generous moderation and honourable consistency.

STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE.

## VII.

### THE TREATY OF SAN STEFANO.

[The next letter in the series was written in April, 1878, but not published, because it was partly anticipated by the announcement of an approaching Congress at Berlin. It lays bare the unreasonable and excessive demands made by Russia in the Treaty of San Stefano, reviews the most objectionable clauses, and indicates a line of policy on which fair terms of peace might be made.]

APRIL 29, 1878.

MUCH as the affairs of Eastern Europe are at present entangled, one ray of light breaks through, and suggests a hope, perhaps only a deceitful one, of no very distant solution. Among those writers who are supposed to reflect more or less the general impression, an idea begins to prevail that the time is come for a frank exposure of the real points of difference between England and Russia. Much time has certainly been laid out in bandying general suggestions about Congresses and the comparative vantage-ground of ships and battalions, while it becomes every day more clear that the real aim of each party underlies the outward objects of dispute.

Let us "*drag this struggling monster into light.*" It is simply which of two characters ought to be ascribed to the treaty of San Stefano. Is the treaty a mere act of pacification between two belligerents, or is it a preliminary arrangement subject to the supervision of all the Powers which were parties to the treaty of Paris in 1856, and to that of London in 1871?

Between these adverse views of the same object, the one

entertained by Russia, the other by England, there is a *medium*, which would have the effect of admitting the right of other Powers to interfere, and also the claim of Russia not only to emancipate the Slavonian provinces of European Turkey, but to obtain a liberal indemnity for the severe sacrifices of the war.

The treaty of San Stefano, as it now stands, would virtually reduce the Porte to a state of vassalage and financial nullity. What remained of the Sultan's dominions would be subject to constant insecurity; its inhabitants would have to lie under a stifling weight of taxation, and as to its host of creditors, foreign and domestic, their lot would be one of utter despair.

The right of Russia to inflict such a state of prostration may well be contested. It is certain that the demand of the Powers when acting together warranted no such consequence. More certain still is it that the treaties of Paris and London pledged those who signed them to respect the principles of Turkish independence and territorial integrity.

The Collective Powers, Russia included, took occasion from the outbreak in Herzegovina to require more complete execution of those internal reforms which had been promised by the Ottoman Government, and guarantees sufficient to secure their reality. The Sultan adopted a system of reform which placed all classes of his subjects on an equal footing in point of civil rights, but he declined to give the requisite securities.

The Conference of Constantinople ensued, Russia, we all know, acted with the other Powers, and a signal failure was the result of their united efforts. Then came a period of Russian declarations and interchanges of opinion elsewhere.

The upshot of all was war between Russia and Turkey, neutrality on the part of other powers, England in parti-



cular, and a renewal or continuance of hostilities by provinces endeavouring to throw off the Turkish yoke.

Russia had no separate cause of quarrel with the Porte, only a greater degree of interest in the disputed question of reform and its securities. In taking a course of her own, she limited her pretensions in the event of being victorious, and assumed in a general way the air of a champion prepared to combat on behalf of her late partners in Conference. Right or wrong in point of opinion, the Porte engaged in the war on a principle of self-defence, and circumstances which strained the resources of Russia, exhausted those of Turkey.

It has become an European duty to inquire how far the act of pacification answers to these antecedents. There is no necessity for going into a detailed examination of the terms. The broad features of the case cannot be concealed from the most careless inspection. Wherever our just expectations have been satisfied, the consistency is little more than negative. The passage of the Straits, the Danube, and the Black Sea, are not expressly withdrawn, but left open for discussion with others not parties to the war; Constantinople is silently respected, and the conquering Emperor is content to seek his territorial encroachments in Asia. Bessarabia, so eagerly coveted by those who owed so much to the Roumanians in their siege of Plevna, has the appearance of an after-thought. But there is no mistaking the character and would-be effect of the treaty when viewed in its entire significance. Muscovite not European, excessive not considerate, ruinous not corrective, surer to gall than to heal, inconsistent with previous bearings, in short, rather an ambitious spoliation in the guise of peace than a peaceful rescue from evils pressing, in fact and in prospect, on national welfare in earth's most civilised quarters. The preliminaries of San Stefano, to be tolerated at all, must

of necessity undergo a close inspection and a remedial curtailment.

Why should not this ratification be effected by amicable means in the shape of a Congress or even of direct negotiation? Neither England nor Russia can possibly be desirous of war, especially of such a war as might ensue if the bloodhounds were once more let loose. If England is in the foreground at present, it is only because she is free from separate considerations which more or less restrain the other Powers. She represents a common interest differing only here and there in degree, her own share in some respects being, perhaps, the greatest.

A congress was thought at one time to be the most feasible instrument of pacification; and there are still many who have not yet given up that persuasion. At whose door is the hindrance to be justly laid? Russia declares she has communicated the terms of her agreement with Turkey in full, that nothing whatever is reserved, and that she is ready for a congress, in which every member would be at liberty to propose any point of the question for discussion, and likewise to retire, if so disposed. England is understood to require that the preliminaries of San Stefano should be laid before the congress for deliberation as the necessary complement of their validity. Russia would have the English objections to her treaty specified beforehand. England seems to think that the treaty is so impregnated with objectionable matter that no part of it should be exempt from the collective judgment of the Powers who signed the treaties of Paris and London.

If this statement of mine be correct, it would be hard not to give the advantage to England. But Russia may prefer holding out in opposition to a *single* power, which rather prepares for war than threatens it. On the other hand a congress offers much that naturally tends to peace. The

members, apart from their politics individually, lean to that side. Acquiescence is readier amongst numbers, than face to face with a single opponent. Suggestive counsels are more likely to proceed from several heads than from one. Even when these favourable chances end in disappointment, the case is not worse than before, and public opinion will rise with increased energy to the rescue of its endangered interests.

A brief statement of the most striking among the objectionable clauses of the treaty may be useful here. At the head of them Bulgaria stands out in colossal magnitude, and the war indemnity is of corresponding proportions.

Added to these is the protracted supervision of Russia, which, like Milton's leviathan, lies "*floating many a rood*" over a scorching expanse. Of Constantinople, the Straits, and the Danube, it may be repeated that they are not appropriated.

Armenia is a volume of itself, and the cession stipulated at San Stefano, including as it does Batoum, Kars, and Bayazet, can hardly pass without anxious misgivings.

Reverting to Bulgaria it is surely unfair and unreasonable to extend that province beyond the limits which it has held under the Turkish Government. Autonomous and tributary, it might enjoy an existence free from Turkish misrule and less inimical to the Sultan. The arrangement might perhaps be further improved by detaching the Dobrudscha, and strengthening therewith the Danubian state of Roumania.

If Turkey is not to be crushed the war indemnity requires a very considerable reduction. That portion of it which is not to be covered by a territorial cession, might be fixed at a large but reasonable amount, payable by annual instalments spread over a limited number of years and leaving the option of an earlier payment of the whole.

With respect to Russian supervision, its dangerous pressure would be diminished without prejudice to its legitimate purposes by making its application fixed and short, agreeable to the fair requirements of each separate case, whether civil or military.

The Russian authorities recoil naturally enough from any humiliating dictation; but surely no discredit can attach to concessions solicited amicably on equitable grounds, especially when resistance could not be ultimately maintained without exposing the wilful party to hatred from *underfoot*, enmity from more than one side, and irritable mistrust from all, operating unfavourably to Russia on questions avowedly open, and entertaining in other states a watchful look-out for occasion of retort and practical retaliation.

Russia might almost be said to have foreseen these rocks ahead in giving a *preliminary* character to the treaty of San Stefano.

No such foresight appears to have enlightened her statesmen on the subject of Bessarabia. They seem to have forgotten that the possession of that district only dates from the treaty of Bucharest in 1812, and that the eagerness with which they press their demand exposes them to the suspicion of having some other motive for that injustice than the wish to remove every memorial of their Crimean reverses.

There seems to be no essential difference of opinion in Europe as to the expediency of leaving Constantinople in the Sultan's hands. Whatever may be the cause of that forbearance, it follows that his Government should be free to act upon its own judgment in all that relates to the interests or rather the duties of the position. But how can that be if the articles signed at San Stefano are carried into full effect? Russia has the appearance of having been

tempted to step out of her wonted policy of a bit by bit advance, and, tiger-like, to over-power her prey at a single bound. The wisdom of this change in a view to ultimate success may be unquestionable at St. Petersburg, but there is room for doubt among those who, at more or less distance, can exercise a judgment unbiassed by local predilections.

If there be truth in the argument which threads the preceding statement, honour and public approval may well attend upon the party who takes the lead in opening the path to its application. Statesmanship and its handmaid diplomacy must be strangely out of order if they fail to hit upon some creditable expedient for reaching a point of departure directed to ends of such priceless advantage. What epithet must we assign to the age we live in, should Reason, Justice, and Humanity unite their voices in vain for a peaceful settlement ?

STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE.

## VIII.

# MEMORANDUM ON THE ANGLO-TURKISH CONVENTION.

[Hitherto unpublished.]

JULY, 1878.

THE new treaty between England and Turkey is almost as great in importance as the surprise which its sudden appearance has excited. Whether we look to its immediate effects, or to its eventual consequences, the quickest perception, the largest experience, may find it difficult to form any conclusive judgment, either of the advantages which it secures, or the hazards and embarrassments which it may entail. It demands a close, a serious, an impartial examination under each of the principal aspects whereon falls a colour more or less impressive on any international transaction. There is the moral point of view: how stands the treaty when measured by the rule of right and wrong? Next comes the political consideration: have the contracting parties avoided giving offence to other states? Practicability has also its place in the account: can the proposed objects of the treaty be realized by means at the disposal of its framers? England in particular has, moreover, to weigh the merits of the treaty in a constitutional, and also in a financial sense. Would it be prudent, would it be safe, to overlook the tendency of engagements imposed upon the country by ministerial authority alone, and the uncertain liabilities to which our revenue is exposed by virtue of the same one-sided power?

Such is the range of an incident which has well-nigh cast into shade the Berlin Congress and all its attendant interests. Journals, reviews, and debates may in time throw a broad light upon the whole matter. But a retired individual must be content to pass in review the more obvious pros and cons of each division. Let us take them in the order already adopted.

*Morality*: It may be thought wrong for a Christian Power to form an alliance for the defence of a Mahomedan Empire even to the extremity of war. It may be answered that England has done as much before, and that Her Majesty the Empress of India is virtually pledged to defend her millions of Mussulman and Hindoo subjects. But neither of these replies can be said to go the whole length of justification. The new alliance is by no means temporary and occasional, like others which preceded it. Its duration is indefinite; and as to India, the territory is British property, and we are bound by duty as well as right to protect its inhabitants. There is still the plea of securing a numerous population of Christians from Turkish misrule. So pleaded Russia twenty years ago; and England, in concert with France, opposed the pretension by force of arms, and crushed it by the Treaty of Paris. But it may be alleged that England's protection is at once more free from ambitious motives, and warranted by a clearer treaty-right, and therefore more likely to prove effectual.

*Policy*: The intended protectorate can hardly fail to excite the jealousy of other Powers having Mediterranean interests—France in particular—and to embitter the enmity of Russia against England. Such Powers, nevertheless, as are content to prolong the Porte's possession of Constantinople and its Straits, may be reconciled by that motive to the new unassociated alliance. There can no more be any doubt of England's resolution to maintain at

any risk her long-established place among the highest of the world; and whether we look to India, to intermediate railways, or to the Suez Canal, we may find reasons for satisfaction at least plausible, if not indisputably sound. With respect to antecedent principles of international policy, the Anglo-Turkish Treaty, while it strengthens a main object of the Paris settlement, may be censured as a departure from that union of the principal Powers which the Berlin Congress so usefully exhibits.

*Practicability:* Under this head must be classed the occupation of Cyprus, the protection of Asiatic Turkey, the defence of British India, and the improvement of the protected territory not only with respect to land, trade, and revenue, but also to administrative reforms, and the effective correction of misrule in principle and practice. It may be asserted, with some degree of confidence, that all these results are attainable by means within the range of British power, in so far as consists with national realities; but much must, of course, depend upon the selection of competent agents, the vigilance and vigour of Government; and much also must be left to professional judgment, whether civil, military, or scientific. The field, no doubt, is ample, the want of improvement great, and the final objects in view important and beneficial in no small degree.

It remains for me to add a few words on the points of *finance and constitution*. The former, I fear, lies open to serious, it may be, embarrassing contingencies, more easy to foresee in general than to specify in particular. The climate and defective harbours of Cyprus, the obstacles to a successful communication by rail from Aleppo to Busheer, the ignorance, pride, and fanaticism of Turkish officials, are so many causes of either difficulty or loss, and consequently of expense. But they may be met, in part at least, by a more equitable arrangement of receipt and liability



than the treaty, as hitherto published, presents. The second point in question has reference only to the movement of Indian troops, and the actual occupation of Cyprus on the single authority of the cabinet. If there be matter for consideration in these respects, it will probably find its place in the debates of Parliament.

On the whole it seems fair to conclude from the promises, taken with reference to the late extravagant enactments of San Stefano, that circumstances have recently occurred to warrant the adoption of strong measures in aid of the Porte's independence, that motives for taking them pressed emphatically on the British Government, that the adoption of them without breach of peace is a title to favour, though not perhaps to entire approval. Results belonging to the future can hardly be excluded from the account, and if the balance of pro and con cannot yet be struck with the requisite precision, statesmen may well reserve their verdict, and for the present either acquiesce with protest, or object without blame.

Our ministers have evidently incurred a more than common amount of responsibility. The engagements they have contracted, however opportune for the moment, are fraught to all appearance with onerous obligations, unavoidable difficulties, embarrassing hazards, and uncertain successes. Was there necessity for exposing the nation to such momentous chances? Could the evil of the hour have been met with some measure of a less endangering kind? The answers to these essential questions remain to be supplied by public opinion expressed in its constitutional forms.

## IX.

### REVIEW OF AFFAIRS IN TURKEY SUBSEQUENT TO THE BERLIN TREATY.

[In February, 1880, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe drew up the following paper, now published for the first time, in which he described the condition of Turkey at that moment, and considered once more the reforms which are indispensable to the continued existence of the Sultan's rule in Europe. It will be observed that many of the views expressed in this and the preceding papers have been strikingly justified by subsequent events. The suggestion of a commission to consider the whole subject of Turkish finance and debt has recently been put forward — of course for interested motives — by the Porte itself.]

FEBRUARY, 1880.

EVERYONE knows that the Eastern Question, as it is called, has been a cause of trouble, more or less serious, throughout Europe during the last four or five years. The Turkish provinces in Asia, and Egypt to a certain degree, have been shaken by the storm. The Congress assembled at Berlin was looked to as a port of refuge and a source of durable tranquillity. This sanguine expectation, it must be allowed, has not proved an immediate or hopeless disappointment. The forms of peace have been renewed and even maintained during a number of months. The original seat of disturbance has been quieted. Extreme pretensions have been reduced. The prostrate have been placed on their legs. The great channel of Eastern Commerce has been assigned to its previous guardians. England has thrown its sword into the lighter scale of a balance which it concerns the general interest to preserve; and a point is reached at which the Porte must feel that it cannot retain a footing in Europe without an honest execution of its

promised, its proclaimed, and in some respects its half-tried reforms.

These results of the Berlin Congress are, no doubt, beneficial, and even satisfactory, when viewed with reference to the narrow ground of accommodation left open by previous mistakes, and the neglect of favourable opportunities. But it is painful to entertain the impression that they are incomplete and transitory. Remedies were needed for an extensive mischief never thoroughly uprooted, but rather stretching out its fibres underground while the surface alone was smooth, and throwing up at times a noxious vegetation fatal to the growth of useful products. But it seems that instead of remedies we have nothing but palliatives, respectable in their way, yet affording no assurance of cure, and already budding into symptoms of reviving trouble. The financial embarrassments of the Porte interfere with the enforcement of necessary reforms. There is additional weakness occasioned by want of confidence between the Sultan and his ministers. Great discontent arises from the defective payment of wages and salaries. The Greeks continue to press their demand for a large territorial cession by Turkey under pretence of rectification. The Albanians are displaying a readiness for revolt in order to obtain some autonomous form of government. The Bulgarians seem to be irreconcilable with their Mussulman neighbours. The occupation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina by Austria is still an unsettled grievance in the eyes of the Porte. A sword, like that of Damocles, hangs over the Sultan's head in the shape of that indemnity which Turkey is bound by treaty to pay to Russia.

To any who appreciate the interests affected by this state of things in prospect, and still more, should apprehensions ripen into reality, the perception of a remedial plan must surely be an object of earnest desire. He will not be re-

strained by difficulties ; he will not be ashamed of failure. It may have been his lot, like mine, to pass many years from time to time in Turkey, to have much occasional intercourse with various classes of its population, and to learn by experience the temper of its government, the character of its policy, and the good or bad qualities of its ministers and other leading authorities. But there, as elsewhere, and indeed more than elsewhere, the changes have been great within the last score of years, so great that the experience of an earlier time may rather mislead the judgment than enlighten it. There is nevertheless a duty which overrules all other considerations, and to that paramount obligation I devote what slender means I still retain of helping to solve the question, which, being unsolved, threatens a large portion of the civilized world with unspeakable calamities.

We are now in view of the elements out of which a somewhat hazardous attempt to evolve order has to be made. Notwithstanding its losses in both continents, the Turkish Empire still extends over a considerable field of territory. Its population, as we all know, is composed of various races, distinguished by their respective languages and creeds, in some parts intermingled, in others distributed into separate patches occupying land of more or less extent. One grand division dualises the whole into what were at one time the dominant race of conquerors, and the tributary victims of conquest. This harsh line of severance has been gradually softened by habits of intercourse, and latterly by sovereign concession or legislative improvement. There is no aristocracy forming a class. Possessors of independent property are few among the Turks, and those few are for the most part *Ulemahs*, that is to say clerical. Ministers and other persons in authority are taken from the population at large. Their fortunes, with rare exceptions, consist of salary, perquisites, and pensions. Education, though of late more liberal,

rests principally on the Koran and its commentaries, a nest of prejudice, self-sufficiency, and exclusiveness leaving, however, room for good manners to a surprising degree. Veils and harems have not ceased to deprive the Moslem community of female influence, operating elsewhere so beneficially on the character of society. The army is exclusively Turkish, Christians and others being taxed for exemption from military service. The courts of justice for criminal and civil cases are operative over the rayah classes wherever a Turk is concerned. Domestic slavery is still practised in Turkish families. The Sultan has still a despotic power. He no longer disposes of human life at will ; but I am not sure that he might not return to the old system, if he were a man of great talent and determined will. Caliph as well as sovereign, he commands the consciences as well as the persons of his Mahometan subjects. They are therefore brave and submissive soldiers while serving in the ranks. Raised from that level they take the general taint of corruption, and forfeit their claim to implicit confidence. The crowning evil is the isolated position of the Sultan, which exposes him to the flattery and corrupt management of Palace courtiers, whose secret influence affects the ministers of the Porte and renders them alike insecure and mistrustful.

We have now reached the crucial point. Can order be evolved from such chaotic elements ? Can that order be such as to provide for the good government of the Turkish Empire and the welfare of its population ? Can such reforms be obtained as will make the Porte's independence real and satisfactory to other interested powers, particularly to England, who has incurred such heavy responsibility on the subject ? One thing is clear, the inhabitants of Turkey must be brought into a united feeling for their country paramount to those separate habits of thought created by their various races, creeds, and traditions.

The conquering race must cease to be exclusive ; those who have hitherto been held in submission must learn to partake of power with gratitude and moderation. The Sultan must cease to be the Caliph, and must become the Sovereign of his people. But the reader need not be told that more than one lion blocks the pathway to such results. It seems to me that an important stride might be made in the right direction if the Sultan and his Council were persuaded to abandon all concern about their recent losses, and to devote their efforts to the cultivation of those resources which are still so largely at their disposal. What remains to them in Europe is capable of being turned to good account by reasonable and judicious industry. Asia Minor, more or less productive everywhere, is a country in most parts of remarkable fertility, neglected indeed, but not exhausted by its Mahometan occupants. Syria, Palestine, and Arabia are by no means unproductive appendages to the Imperial sceptre. Even in the European provinces lost to Turkey as subject departments, there follows from their new position a sense of independence which converts their hatred of Ottoman tyranny into a jealous susceptibility of meddling patronage on the part of their deliverers. A tutelary border of this kind may be recognised as subsisting from the mouths of the Danube to the Adriatic coast. The altered feeling of Roumania is no secret. It is reasonable to suppose that the Servians, in strengthening their independence, have also strengthened their unwillingness to be made the tools of a foreign, though Christian, protector. The occupation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina by Austria has hitherto assumed no permanent character, but there is no lack of probability in favour of its indefinite duration ; and accession by treaty, if the extent were unchangeably limited, would have the effect of making Austria a sympathetic instead of a

predatory neighbour to the Sultan's dominions in Europe.

According to the press and town gossips, reform is the foremost and urgent demand of the Porte's best friends, and it would seem that in Asia Minor some process bearing that name is in actual operation. But reform has as many heads as a hydra, and Turkey has need of the whole growth. The important question is with which to begin, and the obvious answer is ECONOMY. *Magnum est rectigal parsimonia*. Sufficient provision being made for internal tranquillity by the formation of an effective Police or corps of Gendarmerie, Turkey may safely dispense for the present with numerous armaments and expensive establishments. Her wisest policy is to acknowledge what every one *knows*, namely, her fiscal destitution, and to replace a nominal extravagance by an open and honest submission to necessity. For this preliminary reform nothing is required but the will of supreme authority.

Much might also be gained with a view to ultimate revival, by clearing up the field of pecuniary obligation. At present that suffocating incubus presses fatally on what remains of vitality to the guardian of the great commercial outlet from the Black Sea and its adjacent shores. To liquidate is not the same as to pay, but it has the effect of bringing an oppressive phantom within the limits of a distinct outline, and pointing to the manner in which the component difficulties may be dealt with, possibly lessened, and, at least, distributed for final extinction on a larger and more convenient extent of time. The work might be confided to a Secret Commission, including two or three foreigners, acting under oath.

This part of the reforming plan might be extended beneficially, and indeed indispensably, to the leading branches of national prosperity, Trade, Agriculture, Mines,

Forests, and what may be termed, Harboursage. Turkey is deficient in practical knowledge, capital, and systematic persistency, and therefore, at least for a time, these elements of national progress must be imported from other countries in proportions due to respect for sovereignty.

Whether reform be applied to Police, to Judicature, to Administration, or to any other indispensable department, a sound and productive system of finance must lie underneath as its requisite foundation. In every case agents of suitable rank must be employed; and agents, be they natives or foreigners, Christian or Mahometan, must be paid, moderately, no doubt, but regularly paid. Here it is that the shoe pinches. Turkey is in a state of bankruptcy. Its inhabitants are already taxed to the utmost. The pump, the hydraulic engine, cannot be worked without assistance from abroad. As matters now stand there can be no assistance of that kind without sacrifice, none without confidence exposed in the end to mischance. The most cautious suggestion of relief can hardly fail to be more or less unpalatable, though strongly recommended by some commanding interest or some unavoidable requirement.

Turkey reformed is no longer the imperious, fanatical Power with which the Christian Sovereigns originally made their treaties. Trade being then the principal object in view, the Capitulations, as they are called, were framed for its encouragement, and also for the personal protection of the merchants and their property engaged in it. The Porte was at that time willing enough, and magnificently careless enough, to be liberal in the matters of commercial exchange, and the custom-house duties were in consequence comparatively light. Alterations were made some years ago, but a larger opening is now recommended by justice, and indeed to all appearance demanded, by the force of events. Abuses of the diplomatic privilege are confidently



stated to have acquired a degree of magnitude seriously injurious to the Turkish revenue, nor is the charge at all improbable, considering the number of small countries which have treaties with the Porte commercially similar to those of the greater ones, and therefore liable to abuse by the swarm of Ministers, Consuls, and their respective adherents.

As all the Powers, great and small, having treaties with the Porte, may be presumed to stand upon the same footing with respect to commercial stipulations, there would, no doubt, be difficulty in procuring the desired agreement. But right to propose and reason to enforce the proposal might be expected to have weight, especially if the Sultan insisted, and the Sultan's most committed and most interested ally were to take the lead by a declared readiness to follow up advice with example. This surely would be the most direct road by which the Turkish Government could regain a portion of that confidence which Europe has been compelled to withdraw, and avoid the ruinous scandal of raising a loan on the credit of securities already pledged by formal engagements to its deluded bondholders.

All other sources of financial relief are not irrevocably sealed up. Abolition of farming the revenue, improvement in the mode of collection, and a determined repression of every corrupt practice, if not already adopted, depend on the will of those who wield the authority of the State.

Overtopping the level of all these reforms, supposing them to be realised, towers the war indemnity extorted by Russia. Though countenanced by custom, justice and generous feeling repudiate the crushing infliction. Besides that, Turkey only stood on her defence. Russia had no separate right of war against Turkey, nor had she any authority from the other signatories of the Treaty of Paris to act for them. Moreover, she obtained by her final triumph

in the field not only the declared object of her hostility in Europe, and more if Bessarabia be included, but large accessions of territory for her own special profit in Asia.

There is one way, and to my apprehension one way only, by which this *lien* on the Porte's independence, this breach of Europe's interests, can be in some moderate degree counteracted. Roumania, Servia, the Herzegovina and Bosnia have all obtained, by the decisions of Berlin, either emancipation from Turkish misrule, or confirmation with enlargement of pre-existing privileges. Advantages of so precious a nature may not be convertible into the customary medium of subsistence, but they possess an appreciable measure in theory, and if the theory were brought into a shape of reality, the gain to Turkey, and through it to the interested parts of Europe would be considerable. The decision is not within the province of any private individual, although it might well become a British Administration to take it in hand. The amount of contribution, after applying a reasonable portion of it to the use of the respective provinces, might be made an object of negotiation with the capitalists, and possibly be employed in procuring a diminution of the whole in return for an immediate payment of a part of the indemnity.

There would still remain the obstacles to good government arising from the social and political condition of the Ottoman Empire. An assembly formed by elections more or less popular has been tried with a fair promise of success, but it has lapsed into vacancy, and we hear no more of its recall. It may well be doubted whether any kind of national assembly would find an appropriate sphere of action in Turkey. Something is wanted between a tool of arbitrary power and an overpowering democracy. A supreme council at the seat of government appears to be the least objection-

able resource, and that form of consultative authority is familiar to the inhabitants of Constantinople. Improved by free elections from the provincial councils open to all classes, and itself so constituted as to check without excluding the Sultan's interference, it might be found to work with sufficient effect for present purposes, and in due season be capable of expanding into a less restrained exercise of administrative power.

When I was Ambassador at Constantinople I never recommended reform as a cure of the existing evils. My language on that subject was scrupulously limited to what appeared to be the reality of the case. It may be expressed in the following terms. You are on the road to ruin, owing in part to your principles of administration, in part to the abuse of them. In advising reform I do not pretend to offer a perfect remedy. Of this only I feel at all confident. The adoption of judicious reform will make your future course more useful to yourselves, and more satisfactory to your allies. It is calculated to retard the evil hour, and to soften its asperity when it comes ; nor does it by any means exclude the possibility of final recovery.

The questions of Cyprus, Railways, and Syria I leave to those who possess information derived from personal acquaintance with the localities. I also refrain from enlarging on the reasons which afford the Danubian and Mediterranean Powers, together with England, such ample causes for opposing the ambitious, never-sleeping policy of Russia with respect to the Turkish Empire and its great intermediate channels. It requires but little information to know that the Bosphorus may be an instrument of good or of evil according to the policy and power of its occupant. In hands of an illiberal character, it might become an obstacle to the commercial intercourse of several nations.

Russia would probably not be slow to make it an outlet for naval armaments capable of increase to any amount, and pregnant with danger to the fleets and territories of Southern Europe.

Public opinion is already settled on these points.

## X.

# MEMORANDUM ON THE CLAIMS OF GREECE TO AN EXTENSION OF TERRITORY.

[Hitherto unpublished.]

*Written in the Summer of 1880.*

I WANT to show, on the strength of responsible documents, why I think the Christian Powers wrong in *forcing* on the Sultan his assent to their territorial demands on behalf of Greece.

My present impression is that the Greeks have no ground of claim: the pretext of their not attacking Turkey when threatened or invaded by Russia, has no value, as the Porte did no wrong to Greece at those periods. I believe, moreover, that neither England alone, nor the Christian Powers united, ever promised more than a consideration of the Greek pretensions at the proper time,\* and when the time came, that they only agreed to advise a *rectification* of frontier.† Finally, that to compel Turkey by force of arms to accept the present demand would be not only unjust, but highly impolitic, and contrary to those European interests which keep the Porte at Constantinople.‡

I believe the existing frontier between Turkey and Greece

\* See Blue Book, Turkey, No. 39 (1878), Berlin Congress, pp. 134 and 135.

† *Ib.*, pp. 140 and 197.

‡ *Ib.*, p. 198.

to be essentially good. It separates the rival parties and affords easy means of defence to the Greeks. It was recommended by the three Plenipotentiaries, and accepted by the London Conference in 1829—30.

That the Greeks should desire a larger extent of territory is natural enough, and it appears that the Berlin Congress, including England, has agreed to *recommend a rectification* of the frontier.

But what is now required of the Sultan is a large cession of territory, which far from producing a permanent settlement would only encourage the Greeks in their desire for still further extension.

Now the Turks have given no cause of offence to the Greeks, and for the interests of Europe require to be strengthened by measures of relief, rather than weakened by further acts of spoilation.

If the Powers of Christendom went so far as to enforce assent to their demands by war, they would commit an act of injustice not only dishonourable, but injurious to their own interests.

A moderate line of extension, however unnecessary, might and probably would be granted by Turkey to the Greek Government, and such a line could be traced without effort on the map.

A sacrifice thus limited might be made without very serious increase of the pressure upon Turkey, and with the additional advantage of saving the character of Christendom from the shame of voluntary discredit and impolicy.

The strongest ground of claim advanced by the Greeks after all falls far short of their present pretensions. In the late war they had prepared for attacking the Turks, and were quieted by England's promise to have their case considered whenever negotiations for peace should take place. This promise was carried into effect at the Berlin Congress, and

the result was a promise to recommend a *rectification* of the Turco-Greek frontier. The Powers are now called upon to make a very considerable cession to Greece under the misapplied term of rectification, on unsubstantial ground, and with no satisfactory prospect of a lasting settlement.

## PART II.

### RÉVIEWS AND ARTICLES.

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#### TURKEY AND GREECE.

[Of the following articles contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the first two contain a review of the political history of Turkey in connection with European politics ; the purpose of the third is clearly explained by its own title ; the fourth and fifth comprise a summary of the history of the revival of Greek independence.]



# XI.

## TURKEY.—I.

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[TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NINETEENTH CENTURY."

MAY, 1877.)

SIR,—The article which occupies the last leaves in this number of your Review was, of course, known to you beforehand. You were also acquainted with the manner in which it came under my notice after being wholly out of sight and memory little less than fourteen years. It is with pleasure that I accede to your wish of publishing it. Whatever interest it retains may be traced to the essential vitality of the Eastern Question. Your own description of it as a *bird's-eye view* may best enable the reader to appreciate its character.

Circumstances and personal influences have necessarily had their effect upon the general question, and require some special notice in order to explain what here and there might otherwise seem to be contradictions.

Such statements or remarks as are thus required may find, I think, their most appropriate place at the close of each part of my original paper.

Yours truly,

STRATFORD DE R.]

IN this nether world of ours it often happens that what is the most talked of is the least known. We like to have the sources of wonder well stirred within us. Life, in a

physical point of view, is excitement. Wonder, by exciting our curiosity, quickens the sense of existence, and nothing leads more to wonder than the mysterious and unknown. Was ever country, for instance, more talked of and written about than Turkey? Yet in some respects, and those not the least important, Japan and New Zealand are better known to us than the Sultan's empire. Geographically, we have a fair notion of its outline by sea and by land. Historically, we are not without the means of learning by what succession of events and under what inspiration the Turks obtained so vast an extent of dominion. Commercially, we are acquainted with the principal products of Turkey, and the foreign articles which enter most into the consumption of its inhabitants. We possess even a general idea of the religious tenets and national usages which give more or less a peculiar form and colour to that complicated texture of races, creeds, languages, and costumes, which is pictured on our mind's eye whenever we think of the Levant. But when some passing occurrence, some political omen, forces our attention into a closer examination of the actual state of Turkey, of the relations in which the sovereign and his people, the various classes of society, the government and foreign powers stand severally towards one another, we find it no easy matter to obtain a clear insight into these various departments of a most extensive and complicated subject. Have we occasion to appreciate with correctness the causes of weakness, disturbance, and decay, which operate so powerfully on the Ottoman Empire, or the character and extent of those undeveloped resources on which the advocates of Turkish regeneration bottom their hopes, we are sadly at a loss for information calculated to enlighten our judgment and to fix our opinion on solid and practical grounds.

Our marked deficiency in these respects can hardly fail to

expose us to serious errors. We are liable to form a mistaken estimate of the great interests which may at any moment be irretrievably compromised by our ignorance, or to neglect the timely adoption of measures which might avert, or, at least, indefinitely postpone, a dangerous and threatening contingency.

The author of these pages would mislead the public if he pretended to supply the amount of knowledge required to meet so vast a demand. He can only hope to bring more prominently and distinctly into view such circumstances in the state of Turkey as are essential to a clear apprehension of the subject, and to place in their proper light those leading considerations which are best calculated to settle our judgment as to the affairs of that country. Should he succeed in carrying out the plan thus limited, and render thereby his own convictions acceptable to others, he would find in that result a full compensation for the trouble and anxiety which are sure to wait on the performance of such a task. His motives for undertaking it are stimulated by recent events, particularly by the death of Sultan Abdul-Medjid, and his brother's accession to the Ottoman throne. These unexpected changes have directed public attention more than ever towards the seat of power in Turkey, and it is by no means improbable that a crisis of vital importance to ourselves and to all Europe may speedily arise out of their consequences. A residence of some years in the Levant, and personal opportunities of observing much that has occurred there of late, may perhaps entitle him to an impartial hearing.

The Turks are separated from us by so many barriers that, when we are summoned to give them a thought, our first impression is one of surprise that we should have any interests in common with them, or that we should entertain any wish either to press our advice upon them, or to step

forward, at our own cost, in their defence. Why, it may naturally be asked, should a Christian State concern itself about the welfare of a people whose rule of action is the Koran? Why should those who live under a free constitution desire the maintenance of an empire governed on despotic principles? Why should a nation whose Saxon literature embraces the whole circle of knowledge, ally itself with a horde of Tartars—for such the Turks originally were—whose written idiom is almost exclusively confined to tracts and commentaries steeped in bigotry and alien from truth?

Yet, obvious and natural as these impressions may in appearance be, we cannot with prudence or safety adopt them as the grounds of our national policy. Long before we had any territorial footing in the Mediterranean, that spirit of trade and navigation, which belongs so emphatically to the British Isles, had led us into commercial intercourse with the shores of Turkey. Those who embarked in the trade with that country required protection for their persons and properties against the violence of a despotic government, the cupidity of local authorities, and the prejudices of a fanatical population. We are indebted to the same great Princess for the Levant and East India companies, which, in their day, though now consigned to the common resting-place of humanity, rendered service to the State on no common scale of magnitude. It was in connection with the former, and in support of its establishment, that our first ostensible engagements with the Porte were contracted under the name of "capitulations." These, and some additional treaties still in vigour, constitute our legal securities for justice and friendly treatment wherever the Sultan's power is practically maintained.

The charter of the Levant Company, though it originated in the year 1681, dates in its improved shape from the reigns

of James I. and Charles II. The capitulations, as now existing, date from the year 1675, but refer in several of their preliminary clauses to earlier periods, beginning with the reign of Elizabeth.

The trade which, thus protected, took root and gradually spread through the Levant, has, we all know, of late years taken much larger proportions. It now comprises the transit trade with Persia, and altogether stands at a high figure in our table of imports and exports, as annually presented to the two Houses of Parliament. It also includes our trade in grain and other important articles of produce with the Danubian Provinces, and in other articles with the neighbouring districts of Russia. The shipping employed in conveying such articles of export from that quarter, as well as the corresponding articles of exchange manufactured in Great Britain, must of necessity thread its way through the narrow, well-fortified channels of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. No inconsiderable portion of our trade with Hungary, and in general with the States of Austria, inclines to follow the same direction; and that tendency can hardly fail to be increased by the new and shorter lines of communication, which, as in the recent instance of Kustendjee, promise to facilitate our means of commercial intercourse, whether by rail or by canal.

M'Culloch, in his celebrated work, the *Dictionary of Commerce and Commercial Navigation*, remarks that "the trade between England and Turkey is of much greater value and importance than is generally supposed, and it appears to be susceptible of an almost indefinite increase."

He goes on to say that "in 1825 we exported direct to Turkey, including what is now the kingdom of Greece, 13,674,000 yards of cotton cloth, and 446,462 lbs. of cotton twist. In 1831, we exported to Turkey (exclusive of the Morea) 24,555,000 yards of cloth, and 1,735,760 lbs. of twist."

“ Plain goods ” (speaking of Manchester), he adds, “ now form the half of our investments for Turkey, and it is impossible, seeing the extent to which articles of this sort are made use of in all parts of the Empire, to form any clear idea of the magnitude of this trade.”

Ubicini, in his valuable letters on Turkey, refers to the eventual concession by the Sultan's government to European foreigners of the power to hold land as property in the Ottoman dominions.

Calculez (says he, in the pursuit of this idea) l'essor prodigieux que peuvent prendre, en peu d'années, l'agriculture et le commerce de la Turquie, sortie de son mal précaire, dégagée des entraves qui la gênent, maîtresse de ses populations, et fécondée à l'intérieur par l'industrie et les capitaux de l'Europe, dont les armes la défendront contre les attaques du dehors.

In confirmation of these prospects, even under the existing system of Turkish law, we learn from the returns presented officially to Parliament that in the year 1854 our imports from Turkey, Moldavia, Wallachia, Egypt, and Syria, amounted in real declared value to £6,131,110, and from Turkey alone to £2,219,298; that four years later, namely in 1858, the former of those two amounts had increased to £9,786,299, and the latter to £2,632,716; that, moreover, taking the account of exports of British and Irish produce to all the countries specified above for the same years respectively, in real declared value, the amount for 1854 was £4,475,483; for 1858, £7,188,528, and for Turkey alone £2,758,605 in 1854, £4,256,406 in 1858.

Experience and conjecture, facts and appearances, thus converge towards the same point, and warrant a steady belief that the interest we take in the welfare of Turkey is not imaginary, but well-grounded, substantial, and progressive. Be it remembered at the same time that in giving our support to the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire, to the

improvement of its administration, and to the expansion of its resources, we promote the interest of a State whose commercial policy is singularly liberal, and from an earlier period in advance of European legislation. M'Culloch, in his work already quoted, observes that "in almost all that relates to her commercial regulations Turkey is entitled to read a lesson to the most civilised European powers." Whatever may have been the cause of it, this superiority in so important a respect is highly to the credit of a government so constituted as that of Turkey. Ascribe it, if you please, to ignorance or to indifference—that ignorance, which steps instinctively before others into the right course, possesses a claim to our goodwill, and that indifference, which opened a great empire to useful intercourse with all friendly countries, had at least the merit of not being repulsive in its character. But on either of these suppositions how are we to explain the positive encouragement given by the Porte to commercial adventurers from abroad, and carried even to the extreme of allowing the ambassador and consuls of their nation to exercise judicial authority within the Turkish dominions?

At all events, in so far as the Porte, however mechanically, acted on the principles of free trade, the advantage which her adoption of them conferred on foreign countries operated to the effect of diminishing that estrangement which mutual fanaticism had long engendered between the Christian and the Mussulman. England and France in particular were not slow to improve the opening afforded by these means to a more cordial understanding between their respective subjects and the inhabitants of Turkey. The British Government appears to have lost no opportunity of cultivating friendly relations with the Sultan. Its endeavours from an early period were directed towards the maintenance or restoration of a state of peace in the Levant, and those

endeavours became more frequent and active in proportion as the declining strength of Turkey yielded to the pressure of neighbouring powers. Even the apparent exceptions offered by our policy in 1806, when, in league with the Russians, we sent a squadron to the Bosphorus, and in 1827, when we joined with the Czar and the Bourbon in founding the constitutional monarchy of Greece, were not the results of any unfriendly sentiment. In the former case, which was that of a fearful crisis in European affairs, we had to detach the Porte from a dangerous and unwilling subserviency to France. In the latter we aimed at bringing the Porte into an arrangement which promised to have the effect of closing a breach in her dominions favourable to Russian aggression, and of realising a system of reform required for the recovery of her independence and internal prosperity.

Knolles in his history of the Turks, which was praised so highly by Dr. Johnson, relates that in the year 1621 Sir Thomas Rowe, a distinguished diplomatist of that time, arrived at Constantinople with the character of ambassador in ordinary from King James the First. Among the important objects which Sir Thomas was instructed to submit to Sultan Osman, there figures an offer of British mediation between His Highness and the King of Poland, who were then at war with each other. In the discharge of this duty the ambassador is stated to have used the following words on his sovereign's behalf:—

His Majesty hath commanded me to offer himself as a mediator of peace to accommodate the late breach with the kingdom of Poland, . . . which, if your Majesty shall hearken unto the rather for his sake, as your royal ancestor hath done in the like occasion, His Majesty will accept it as a respect of your love, which will assure and increase the commerce and friendship of your dominions.

The Sultan in his reply to the king declares that—  
whensoever on behalf of the Polacks an ambassador shall arrive at our



high court, . . . and shall desire our favour and amity, by the mediation of your resident now in our imperial port, all matters shall be pacified and ended, and with a pen we will blot out all former differences, and the peace being so established, your instances and desires for them shall have grateful acceptance with us.

His Highness's letter concludes with the warmest expressions of goodwill and friendship on his part towards the King of England, and of a confident expectation that, "as in times past," the "ancient, perfect, and acceptable course of friendship will be always observed and maintained."

It is evident from a perusal of these passages that the mediation of England was acceptable to the Porte, that it had been used on previous occasions, and that both parties felt the value of each other's friendship, the one as taking a lively interest in the peace and welfare of Turkey, the other as liking to have an instrument of accommodation on which reliance could be placed in times of emergency.

The Turkish Empire, in proportion as its power declines, is exposed on every side to the encroachment of its neighbours. Even Persia, though a Mohammedan country, yet differing from Turkey on points of religious belief, and greatly inferior with respect to extent and population, is not a rival who can be safely despised. Since the last retreat of the Turks from before Vienna, Austria has succeeded in recovering much of the territory which she had previously lost in her wars with them; and although her habitual policy on that side is far from being aggressive, she would not be wanting in power to share the spoil should Turkey ever be marked by others for dismemberment. Justly or not, few doubt that France has an eye, eventually, to Syria and Egypt; nor can anyone be reasonably surprised when Russia betrays her impatience to possess the golden key of the sick man's chamber-door. For other powers, who either participate generally in the Levant trade, or have a special share in that of the Black Sea, there would be little satis-

faction in the transfer of the whole course of the Danube to Austria, or in that of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus to Russia, whose commercial policy differs so widely from the commercial practice of Turkey. For us, who have strong inducements not to sympathise with such powers, and who, moreover, are bound, in virtue of our East-Indian possessions, to prevent the Isthmus of Suez from falling into other and rival hands, there can be no prospect less attractive than that of a dissolution of the Turkish Empire. Any compensation which we might find it necessary in such case to seek for ourselves on the ground of international equipoise would probably cost us dear, and prove, at the best, inadequate.

Considerations of this kind must surely have weighed with those who successively administered the affairs of England from after the Revolution of 1688. I have already cited an early example of the policy thus recommended to the British Government by circumstances traceable to natural causes, or, at least, to causes independent of our control. Another, on a larger scale, is to be found in the later annals of Europe.

During many years, scarce less than twenty, the Turks had been engaged with Austria, or rather the Emperor of Germany, in hostilities, generally disastrous to themselves, when England in the reign of William and Mary, seconded by the States-General of Holland, mediated a peace between them. The treaty, which was not definitively signed till January, 1699, was accompanied with separate treaties between Poland, Russia, Vienna, respectively, and the Porte.

Again, in 1712, it appears from a letter, addressed by Sultan Achmet the Third to Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, and cited in the fifth volume of Russell's *Modern Europe*, that England, together with the States-General, had offered

their mediation to effect a lasting peace between the Porte and Russia, which is described as having received a full ratification from the two contracting parties. England and her colleague in the mediation are styled in this letter the "ancient allies" of the Porte.

In 1739 the war, which had commenced between Russia and the Porte three years before, and somewhat later between the Porte and Austria, was brought to a conclusion, not by the mediation of England, but with the assistance of France. The terms of peace were advantageous to the Sultan, whose arms had previously obtained more than one important success in battle over the Austrians. It may be inferred from these circumstances that if the British Government abstained from taking part in the negotiations for peace, they were actuated less by indifference to the interests of Turkey than by a well-grounded reliance on the strength of the Sultan's position.

The war which broke out in 1787 between the Turks and the Russians afforded the British Government an opportunity of displaying a very remarkable consideration for the interests of the former. They mediated between the belligerents, and even went so far as to arm in support of their proposition that the Porte should not be compelled to cede the fortress of Oczakoff to Russia. In the Parliamentary debates of 1791-2 there is evidence of no small difference of opinion on this subject; but the views of the Ministers were supported by decisive majorities, and much of the difference is to be attributed to party spirit, then running high.

In tracing the policy of England towards the Ottoman Empire from early times we now reach a period when the great questions brought into play by the Revolution of 1789 gave their own peculiar character to passing events, and when everything in public life took colour from the passions engaged on the one side or the other. Our expedition to

Egypt at the close of the last century originated, no doubt, in our state of war with France. But would not our friendly concern for Turkey and the interest we felt in preventing the transfer of Egypt to another power have alone induced us to oppose the progress of Buonaparte's arms? The Turks, at least, evinced no jealousy of our successes, and the co-operation of their forces with ours appears to have been cordial and effective. A few years later, indeed, the increased necessity of making head against a power which set no bounds to its ambition and hatred of British independence, engaged us for Russian objects in a quarrel with our old allies. Yet history shows that no sooner had Russia been forced by the French Emperor to abandon her connection with us than we hastened to open a separate negotiation for peace with them, and that, much as they stood in fear of France, they finally received our plenipotentiary, and concluded a treaty with him. Nor can it be forgotten that, while we were still in a formal state of war with Russia, the Porte requested our mediation for the settlement of her own differences with the Czar, and that, by aid of confidential communications between the British Embassy at Constantinople and the Russian commanders in Wallachia, the treaty of Bucharest was concluded in May, 1812..

The events which accompanied the Hellenic war of independence, though often in appearance and effect hostile to Turkey, were certainly not so in spirit on the part of England. The war in its origin was kindled by internal fermentation, fanned, it may well be supposed, by Russian sympathy and something more. Our intervention, though friendly to the Greeks, was yet more friendly to the Turks, inasmuch as it was directed to a pacification calculated to limit sacrifices on their part, which could not be entirely avoided. The Porte, notwithstanding the massacres com-

mitted under her authority at Constantinople and Scio, might have settled the affairs of Greece by accepting conditions grounded on the concession of an independent administration for the Morea, with Turkish garrisons in its strong places. Sultan Mahmoud, deceived by misrepresentation and self-confidence, determined otherwise, and the results were not only the establishment of a Greek monarchy, but, to our great regret, the battle of Navarino and the Treaty of Adrianople.

It was not long before we displayed the true character of our policy in the Levant. At the risk of a war with France we bombarded St. Jean d'Acre, and helped to drive the forces of Mehemet Ali out of Syria, and later, at the price of much blood and treasure, we declared war against Russia for the protection of the Porte, and undertook in concert with France those vast expeditions which terminated so brilliantly for us and our allies.

The fall of Sebastopol, which most of us are old enough to have witnessed, had the effect of placing us in a new position towards the Ottoman Empire. For the first time in history the Porte has taken part, by means of a solemn treaty, in that international system which has long prevailed among the Powers of Christendom, and we have pledged ourselves by an express and formal guarantee to maintain the independence and integrity of the Sultan's recognised dominions. We are no longer exposed, as heretofore, to the mere hazard of having, in virtue of a traditional policy, but also at our own convenience and discretion, to step forward in support of Turkish interests when threatened with some impending danger. We are henceforward bound by a distinct, imperative obligation, as in the case of Portugal, to redeem the pledge we have given in concert with our allies. Should any aggression be made on the territories or national independence of Turkey, we could not in honour reject the

appeal which would doubtless be made to our good faith, even if it were to involve us in hostilities with an aggressive power or an aggressive coalition. It may be said that such a contingency is remote or improbable. The answer is obvious. What has happened already more than once may at any time happen again. What in earlier times required a long period and an unusual concurrence of circumstances to bring it about, may in these days of frequent innovation, of rapid movement, and of almost morbid impatience, be at our very doors before we are more than vaguely warned of its approach. Is this a fanciful representation? Let us test it by the experience of facts. Who, in the first week of February 1848, foresaw that the political movement in France announced more than the overthrow of a ministry and some extension of the popular franchise, that before the close of the month not only a sovereign but a dynasty would be expelled from the throne and realm of France, and that a republic would as suddenly be established on the ruins of the exploded monarchy? Who could have imagined that, in little more than eight weeks from the period of those events, Berlin would be in the hands of its populace, Vienna at the mercy of its students and volunteers, Metternich an exile, and the Pope a fugitive? Who among those who went to bed in authority on the night which preceded the famous *coup d'état* at Paris, suspected that by daylight next morning he would be a prisoner or a convict, holding his life at the will of a successful conspirator who but two days before had sworn fidelity to the commonwealth over which he presided? Let us not forget that a few words addressed by the French Emperor to the Austrian ambassador at his court, on New Year's day in 1859, gave to Europe the first intimation of a war which in less than six months made the dream of Italian resurrection a reality, and that the colossal struggle now frantically raging in America from one end of the Union to

the other was unperceived by European forethought less than a year ago, and was then, even to American vigilance, no bigger than the prophet's embryo cloud on a remote horizon. Did not the massacres in Syria come upon us by surprise? Did we not feel the necessity of hastening to assist in their suppression? Were we not placed in the alternative of either sending out an expedition ourselves, or relying on the arms and good faith of a rival power? Have we any substantial security against the recurrence of similar horrors, of a similar necessity, and of a similar hazard?

But those who respect the faith of treaties, and acknowledge the claims of international law, may give full credit to others for acting upon the same principles. Such, consequently, may find in the terms agreed upon at Paris a sufficient barrier against any danger to which the Ottoman Empire might otherwise be liable from inherent weakness or habitual misgovernment. For my own part, I should be glad to share this confidence, and to find it borne out by the consistent practice of nations. I fear, however, that experience, which cannot be discarded from political calculations with safety, points but too often in a contrary direction. A temporary pressure or change of political relations will never be wanting to excuse a loose attention to formal engagements. Duty has the pliancy of a sentiment; interest operates with the force of a mechanical power. When the wind is too strong for plain sailing, we take in our canvas, and drive before the gale sometimes even under bare poles. The Congress of Vienna has something to teach us in this respect. Never were the interests of Europe more generally and deeply concerned than at that period. Never did plenipotentiaries meet under circumstances of greater solemnity. Never was there a louder call for honest dealing, and durable settlements. Lo! half a century has not elapsed since the completion of its labours, and

where are now the results of them? Can anyone deny that they have become little more than a record and a name. Have they held good in Italy? Have they prevented the territorial aggrandisement of France? Have they protected the rights of Switzerland? Have they not been openly violated or tacitly disregarded in favour of the very parties whom they were expressly intended to restrain? When the Emperor Nicholas suggested the dismemberment of Turkey was he not bound to that treaty which in 1841 declared the maintenance of the Turkish Empire in its integrity to be a point of solemn agreement amongst the parties who signed it? During the negotiation of the last treaty of Paris in 1856 and since its conclusion, have not appearances in some measure warranted the prevailing impression that France and Russia were prepared to act in concert, though cautiously, for bringing on a solution of the Eastern Question? On the distant and very different theatre, have more than seventy years of brotherhood in the same constitutional system prevented the two great divisions of Washington's Union from tearing their mutual ties asunder, and treating each other, respectively, as tyrants and rebels, the former enforcing and the latter dissolving those mutual obligations with equal injustice and questionable faith? In fine, there is too much reason to apprehend that the treaty guarantee may prove a snare to the Turks as well as to ourselves without furnishing any reliable security against the danger to which their dilapidated empire is exposed from other quarters. They, while relying on the guarantee, are tempted to neglect their internal resources, and we, in the sincerity of our purpose, are disinclined to counteract their negligence by adequate exertions.

A very important interest, already alluded to, comes in aid of the motives suggested by our obligations under the treaty. We are dependent on the Porte for our most direct



and speediest communication with India. In proportion as Her Majesty's territories in that country become more identified with the Government at home, it is desirable that the established means of intercourse between both should be, as much as possible, rapid and sure. Whether the telegraphic wires, and eventually the conveyance by steam, be carried over the Isthmus of Suez or along the valley of the Euphrates, both lines must necessarily stand in need of Turkish protection, and it is evident that whatever tends to weaken or endanger that protection must be injurious to our interests in no common degree.

Let us imagine Egypt in the possession of a power whose population, active, warlike, intelligent, and ambitious, is ever prone to entertain a jealous, and not unfrequently a hostile, feeling towards England. The Mediterranean shores of Egypt are so well fortified—thanks to the skill of French engineers—that whether the Viceroy were to raise the standard of independence, or to be overpowered by foreign stratagem, we should have little chance, and the Porte still less, of forcing his hands, except, perhaps, from the side of Syria, and not even there if the famous canal, with its intended system of defences and its magnificent breadth of water, were completed. In the time of the late mutiny we should have acted with far more immediate effect if a continuous line of electric wires had been at our disposal, and how much greater would have been our difficulties had the passage by Suez been closed to our despatches and our officers—had Sir Colin Campbell, for instance, been compelled to reach the scene of his future triumphs by a voyage round the Cape! The case here supposed may be improbable, the very supposition of it may be unjust; but where such momentous interests are at stake, it is our business to look out, and our duty to guard against the worst that may happen.

These eventualities, remember, are to be taken in connection with the magnitude of their consequences, should they at any time occur. We must take them also in connection with the requirements of our trade in those inland seas which bathe the extensive coasts of European and Asiatic Turkey, with the vast political interests which may be said to constitute us the natural supporters of the Ottoman Empire, and with the treaty obligations which, if they be let to come practically into force, can hardly fail to involve us in many perilous embarrassments and costly sacrifices. Our minds are thus involuntarily brought to an inquiry, bristling indeed with obstacles, but also overflowing with interest and instruction. What is the real condition of that empire in whose destiny we cannot but feel that our country is deeply concerned? How far is the prevailing opinion of its decay and approaching downfall borne out by facts? What are the nature and extent of its remaining resources? By what means can they be so drawn out as to avert or postpone indefinitely its utter ruin and dismemberment? These questions, in truth, are not of easy solution; but they lie in our path, and must be examined, if not removed, before we can hope to arrive at any distinct and satisfactory conclusion.

We owe to Macchiavelli, who is generally considered to be a strong-minded and unprincipled writer, the remark, which no doubt possesses much truth, that a conqueror has no middle course between the two extremes of mixing his own people with the vanquished race or exterminating the latter. The Turkish camp, with a Sultan on horseback for its leader, acted neither on the one nor on the other of these two principles. Jew, Christian, Hindoo, idolater, all, on submission and payment of tribute to the conquering Mussulman, were left in the enjoyment of their property, in the exercise of their respective forms of worship, and, to

a certain degree, under the local authority of magistrates belonging to their own race and creed. Macchiavelli's maxim is vividly illustrated by the consequences of this undecided policy, and the Sultan's government is now reaping in progressive weakness what it originally sowed in the plenitude of self-relying power. Its Christian subjects, those of the Greek Church in particular, live and, in despite of much past oppression and continued humiliation, thrive, apart from their Mussulman fellow-subjects, as objects of mistrust, rather than as sources of strength, to the empire at large. The modern changes in their favour, though mitigating in practice the disadvantages, have not essentially altered the character of their political position. Their numbers, wealth, and knowledge are generally on the increase, while the professors of Islamism decline for the most part in those respects under the influence of circumstances peculiar to their social condition.

The Sultan exercises a supreme sovereign authority over all classes of the population in his empire. He is at the same time a Caliph, hereditary successor of the Prophet, and, in our language, Commander of the Faithful. The laws by which he governs, and distributes justice through his ministers, are fundamentally those of the Koran and its supplementary traditions, constituting in the estimation of Mussulmans, as we all know, the revealed will of God, immutable and all-sufficient. This rule of administration derives an obstructive character from its want of capacity for conforming to the variable wants of society and the expanding views of mankind. It operates moreover as an ever-growing source of discontent among those portions of the population who have no convictions to reconcile them to an arbiter of life, property, and honour, by no means invariably consistent with sound reason or common experience, and gradually more and more discredited by the

evasions and corruptions which stain while they facilitate its administration.

The original mission of Islamism to force all nations into its pale, either as conformists or as tributary subjects, had naturally the effect of placing its professors in a state of hostility, at least virtually, with all independent neighbours. It sanctified aggression, not otherwise justified, on the rights of all, and made resistance, even of the preventive kind, a duty and a necessity on their part. The process, impulsive as it was, and long most wonderfully successful carried in its bosom a principle of exhaustion, which eventually made further progress impossible, and reduced the spirit of conquest to a stagnation more fatal to its energy than productive of a sounder vitality. The same development of power which enabled the border states to say to the Turkish Empire, "Hither, and no further," rendered more apparent and less tolerable the vices of its internal system of government. The Christians within and the Christians without found in their mutual sympathies a fresh aliment of hope for the former and of ambition for the latter.

It may readily occur to anyone who compares the East with the West in point of public administration, that, as a general, though varying, distinction between them, in Eastern communities the people are held to exist for the government, and in Western the government for the people. In this respect the Porte does not belie its oriental origin. Simplicity of form, constitutional indolence, when there is no immediate stimulus, serve, however, to qualify the action of its authority, and, since the introduction of certain reforms, the Sultan's government is less insensible than of yore to the claims and welfare of the people. But enough remains of the old leaven to excuse our anxiety as to what principles and measures are likely to give a permanent

character to the reign of Abdul-Aziz Khan. Appearances thus far announce a desire of improvement on his part, but whether in a Turkish sense, or, according to the notions of Europe, reactionary or progressive, is by no means so clear.

Education as used among the Turks, the practice of domestic slavery, and, above all, the influence of the harem, are so many further obstacles to the social and political regeneration of the Turkish Empire. Each of these difficulties must be taken into account, as affecting, more or less, the whole population of Turkey, as well the families who live by their skill, their trade, or their labour, as those who either belong to the several professions, or enjoy the advantages of wealth and station alike in town and in country.

Children of both sexes are brought up together in the harem to an age which immediately precedes puberty. The boys are then submitted to a separate treatment. Most parents in easy, and all in opulent, circumstances have a tutor at home for their sons. Others resort to such instruction as can be obtained at the established schools, where, with scarcely an exception, the teaching is confined to religious doctrine and the simplest elements of knowledge, with no language but Turkish or Arabic. What passes in the harem is little known without, but the girls, at best, are sure not to learn more than the boys, unless it be needlework and household duties. To ride, to throw the *djerid*, and to shoot at a target, are manly exercises reserved, or nearly so, for youths of condition and their principal attendants.

Of slavery little need be said. The moral effect, especially on young people, of having for servants or companions unhappy creatures possessing no will of their own, and regarded in law as hardly better than cattle, may be

easily conceived, though the records of antiquity prove that, notwithstanding its evil tendency, it may coexist in the same minds with much intellectual vigour and a high sense of public duty.

The harem operates far more perniciously on the interests of society. It confines to the narrow circle of each family those holy influences of the wife, the mother, and the daughter, which in Christian countries purify and irradiate the whole sphere of social life, in so far as human infirmities will allow. It taints, moreover, and degrades those influences within its own contracted limits; it entertains an atmosphere in which the low ungenerous passions grow into luxuriance, and it tends even to counteract by their indulgence the purposes of a beneficent Creator.

Mohammedan Turkey is thus infected with a poison which circulates with its blood, and goes far to explain those signs of a declining population which, except in the capital and at some few favoured points, attract the attention and excite the wonder of travellers in that country. More than a century has passed away since tokens of depopulation were noticed there. I recollect to have read as much in some work of Montesquieu, though I can neither quote the passage nor remember its place. My own observation embraces half that period. Fifty years ago, as now, houses tumbling into ruin, or spaces cumbered with fragments of buildings, were visible in town and village. Graveyards with Turkish tombstones were seen by the roadside, or in open fields apart and far away from inhabited places. Both in Europe and in Asia large tracts of desolation, marked here and there by traces of the plough nearly obliterated, gave evidence of a declining empire. Whatever increase of buildings and inhabitants may be observed at Constantinople, or at Smyrna, we cannot venture to take it as any proof to the contrary, since it is well known that

whenever the means of living, or of living securely, in the provinces falls off without a prospect of revival, the rural or provincial population flows in upon the capital, and produces there a fallacious appearance of prosperity. Think of a freehold estate, comprising some forty thousand acres in surface, with a large proportion of it arable, and much timber, conveniently situated near a port and market town within eighty miles of Constantinople by water, selling not long since for fifteen hundred pounds, after being possessed during several years by English proprietors, and improved through the management of an English bailiff.

The decrease of population affects the revenue and the army as well as the agriculture of the Empire. The taxes on land and produce are generally assessed for periods of not less than four or five years. The proprietors in every separate district of assessment are made responsible for the whole amount, and consequently, as they diminish in number, a greater burden is thrown upon each, together with less capability of meeting the demand and farming with profit. In regard to the army, which is recruited by conscription from among the Mohammedans, a failure in the required number has been felt for several years. This deficiency makes it difficult for the government to spare those youths who, in many cases, are wanted for agriculture or the support of a family. Owing to the same cause, two-thirds of the Ottoman army exist only on paper, and there follows not merely a greater disposition to disorder in the provinces, but also a more exhausting pressure on the service, and less preparation for defence against external enemies. Many parts of Turkey are highlands inhabited by wild tribes warlike in character, independent in their habits, and brought very imperfectly, if at all, under subjection to the Porte. Such, for instance, are the Koords, the Albanians, the Bosnians, the mountaineers of

Taurus, Lebanon, and Montenegro. Such were those who, under the command of Scanderbeg, so long resisted whole armies sent or led against them by renowned viziers, or the Sultan himself in person. Such were the progenitors of Druse and Maronite, opposed in quenchless hatred to each other, but capable of forming an impenetrable barrier against the Turks. The Sultan's troops, who may be said to act as a police with respect to them, would have no lack of employment, were the military conscription carried out to its intended extent.

The various defects and sources of incalculable evil, thus rather enumerated than drawn out into their full proportions, are the more ruinous in a country where a low standard of knowledge, a rude system of finance, a loose method of collecting the revenue, and the want of internal communications, go far of themselves to neutralise the advantages of a splendid climate, a productive soil, and an unrivalled position as well for power as for trade.

The practice of forcing a debased coinage into circulation has been long a source of disorder and discredit, with consequent weakness, in Turkey. That of issuing bonds or assignats on the faith of an arbitrary government has of late increased the mischief. The exposure of the Mirès loan has made it impossible for the Porte to seek any immediate relief in the money-markets of Europe. Her ministers have therefore resorted to a fresh and very extensive issue of paper money, under the name of *kaimés*, not, as heretofore, confined to the capital, but constituting a legal tender in all parts of the Empire. Necessity may excuse the measure, but its effect, especially if the *kaimés* are used for paying up the arrears of the army, is not the less to be apprehended.

Another evil in the department of finance is the habit of farming the principal branches of the revenue. It has



nothing to recommend it but the ministerial convenience of having more positive and earlier data for the estimates of the year. Farming embraces sub-farming, and this part of the system weighs with peculiar severity on the tax-payer, without augmenting the receipts of the treasury. Every artifice is employed by the lowest grade of farmers in order to realise a profit on their purchase-money, and the exactions they resort to for that purpose must be supported by authority as a necessary condition of the system.

No country has more need of railways than Turkey. Nowhere can they be introduced with less sacrifice. When they were first adopted in England, the countless millions spent on turnpike roads, if not entirely confiscated, were at least superseded by the new invention. In the Sultan's dominions, with scarcely an exception, there are no roads. The inland communications are mere tracks, wide enough in some parts, and in fine weather levelled enough by use, for carts and small wagons, but generally more fit for horses and camels. Wherever, by exception, a causeway has been laid down, for the passage, perhaps, of troops and artillery, it belongs to earlier times, and now rather interrupts than assists communication by its broken pavement and clumsy construction. There are districts in Asia Minor—that of Siwas, for instance—where grain is so abundant as to sell for an old song, while on the Black Sea coast, not a hundred miles off, the rival produce of Russia commands a high price. For this impolitic advantage the Russians are indebted to the want of a carriageable road between Siwas and the port of shipment. No objection to railways can be charged to the Koran. Contracts for several have been made by the Porte with companies or enterprising individuals. With the exception, however, of thirty miles at Kustendjee, and about the same at Smyrna, none have yet been carried into effect.

Local wants, if not supplied from the seat of government, have little chance of being supplied at all. No great hereditary properties, no constituted aristocracy, no powerful municipalities exercise that influence which elsewhere gives weight to provincial applications. Some years ago it was decided that a road should be made between Broussa, the capital of what was ancient Bithynia, and the Sea of Marmora. The whole distance was not greater than twenty or, it might be, twenty-five miles. The necessary orders were given, the necessary funds were appropriated. The Pasha of Broussa was empowered to carry the plans into effect, and the neighbouring population was required to devote its labour to the work for little or nothing. To this hour a good half of the road remains to be made. The works, for no apparent reason, came to a standstill, even before the great earthquake had furnished an excuse for their suspension.

If such and so many are the causes of decline within the Turkish Empire, they are not disproportioned to those dangers which threaten its existence from without. These are by no means confined to the ambition of powerful princes or to the working of adverse opinions in Christendom. They spring in great part from causes more strictly natural, from the physical position occupied by Turkey, and the circumstances which attended its political growth. Consider the length of frontier which separates the Sultan's dominions from those of Austria, Russia, and Persia—to say nothing of Greece, Egypt, and Barbary. The waters of the Euxine alone break the continuity of a line extending from the Adriatic to the Persian Gulf. A policy of conquest, not so much resigned by choice as dropped through necessity, operates even now so far as to keep up a jealous attention at the Porte to frontier interests. The Colossus stands on fragile feet, and therefore makes them the principal object

of its care. Head and heart may shift for themselves, provided the extremities be respected. The Porte is thus brought into sensitive contact with its neighbours at a thousand points. Subjects of discussion, motives for quarrel, are seldom wanting; intrigues and sympathy work together for the sick man's ruin; the very distances from one point to another of a vast outline, and of all those points from the capital, serve to weaken the supreme authority and to harass its principal instrument, the army.

Russia cannot be at ease while the key of so large a portion of her empire remains in the Sultan's possession. If it be the will of Europe that the Bosphorus and Dardanelles should undergo no change of hands, we can hardly wonder that Russian policy should seek to command the means of keeping the Porte in awe. That policy finds a natural auxiliary in the religious sympathy of the Greeks; it finds another in the political or religious discontents of Moldavia, Wallachia, Servia, and Bulgaria; yet another in the questionable independence maintained by the highlanders of Montenegro and even of Bosnia. It made Sebastopol, its port and arsenal, what they were before the Crimean war, and it may be numbered among the motives which prevail with Russia to keep up a military establishment at once so onerous and so imposing. It works, moreover, by intrigue, by affiliation with the Armenians, by issuing protections in the form of passports to Christian subjects of the Porte, by tampering with frontier tribes, and moving the springs of corruption wherever they can be played with advantage.

From other motives and in other ways the French, though not immediately bordering on Turkey, but too often act so as to warrant a certain degree of mistrust and apprehension on its part. Their conduct on various occasions in Egypt, Syria, Greece, Tunis, Algiers, and Montenegro, to say

nothing of Moldavia and Wallachia, could hardly inspire the Sultan's government with perfect confidence in their views. They seem, in general, to entertain a low opinion of the Porte's capacity for improvement, and are therefore naturally inclined to shape their policy according to that impression, preparing rather to secure their own interests in case of a break-up than by a system of measures firmly and strenuously carried out to prevent so perilous a catastrophe. It is clear that their conduct tends, by the discouragement it diffuses, to accelerate the decay of the Ottoman Empire, and hence, however reluctantly, we cannot but give it a place in the list of dangers to which that Empire is exposed.

Of other Powers, and the relations in which they respectively stand towards the Porte, little need be said in this place. The policy of England in the Levant is well known, and offers no room for question, except as to manner and degree. Neither Austria nor Prussia is likely, under present circumstances, to take part in any measures unfriendly to the Porte. Together with Greece and Italy they might eventually pretend—and Austria the foremost—to have a share in the spoil, but they can hardly be suspected of wishing to hasten the overthrow of an empire whose dismemberment would offer much greater advantages to others than to themselves.

Be it as it may, we must in fairness admit that on mere grounds of appearance we have no right to impute ambitious schemes or evil intentions to those who despair of the sick man's recovery. Unfortunately there is illness enough to create a world of doubts in the most sanguine mind. The suspicion, to be fairly sustained, must find its justification in other circumstances, and the task of making out a case with respect to them is too invidious to be undertaken without an immediate necessity.

There is something more agreeable, something more promising in view, if we attempt to ascertain how far a disease, apparently deep-seated and attended with many forbidding symptoms, is nevertheless open to remedies and capable of yielding to a well-conducted method of treatment. The inquiry has its interests—it has also its difficulties. The proofs of disorder lie on the surface, and can hardly be mistaken. The means of recovery, when recognised, have much to contend with in their application, and their results in the commencement must be conjectural. That men are liable to perish from want of food is unquestionable; but who can prove at seed-time what the harvest will be? One thing is certain—we must sow betimes in order to reap in season. The alternative is fatal.

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*May 26, 1877.*

The many years which have passed away since I wrote the preceding pages have not been unproductive of incidents tending to modify opinions respecting the much-battered, but well-nigh inexhaustible, question of the East. Not that my own opinions as to its essential points have undergone any important alteration. They are still in favour of keeping the Turkish authority at Constantinople; of reforming their political and administrative system; of maintaining, or, as we must now express it, of restoring peace. Sundry changes of circumstance took place in the interval between the treaty of Paris in 1856 and the rising of Herzegovina in 1875, and to them may justly be ascribed any difference which marks the present state of opinion as to Turkish affairs compared with that which prevailed at the close of the Crimean war. I refer in particular to the policy, or rather the conduct, of Sultan Abdul-Aziz, to the loans con-

tracted by the Porte in Christendom during his ill-omened reign, to the act of bankruptcy which marked the extinction of his credit, and in general to the neglect of those engagements which in reality formed the basis of a new and more cordial state of relations between Turkey and the chief countries of Europe at a period unusually favourable to their fulfilment. The Crimean war, commenced by Russia, had for its object to prevent that Power from realising a paramount influence in Turkey under a conventional right to protect all Ottoman subjects of her religion. The treaty of Paris, which put the seal of Europe on the victorious career of the Allies, was intended to act as a barrier against the renewal of any similar pretensions. How far it has secured that result may be inferred from the Black Sea Convention of 1871, and the recent declaration of independence by the two Danubian Principalities. How far it was fitted to answer its final purpose may be collected from other circumstances, which must be kept in sight both here and elsewhere.

By the seventh article of the treaty an engagement was taken by all the Powers in common to respect, and moreover to guarantee, the independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. By the ninth article the Sultan's plenipotentiary annexed to the treaty a copy of His Majesty's *Hat-homayoon*, and the Powers engaged not to interfere with the internal affairs of the Porte in consequence of that communication. The Powers, no doubt, were bound by that engagement, but the engagement related to the *communication* alone, and to nothing else. The Sultan, on his part, was not the less bound to carry out his proclamation of reforms, and indeed he took it upon himself, on his imperial honour, to give it a full practical effect. Virtually this was the condition on which the Porte was received, to use a French expression, into the family of European States.

Now what, let me ask, was the proclamation, and what was the manner in which it was carried out? The proclamation, though invested with the forms of imperial grandeur, was, in truth, a collection of reforms drawn up by a mixed assemblage of Turkish ministers and foreign ambassadors. The operation took place at the residence of the British embassy in Turkey just before the departure of the Ottoman plenipotentiary for Paris. It was, in truth, on that solemn instrument that His Excellency founded his claim to the full confidence of his Christian colleagues in the ensuing negotiation. To the conclusion of peace succeeded a period of more than nineteen years, during which the Porte was free from any danger of external origin, undisturbed indeed by any trouble of a serious character from within, supported by a threefold increase of its revenue, and gathering in addition by loans from the capitalists of Christendom very many millions of sterling money. If we ask to what account these splendid advantages were carried, the answer must be that the just expectations of Europe with respect to the correction of Turkish misrule were, with some few exceptions, painfully disappointed, and that the large sums of money derived from revenue and loans were either extravagantly wasted, or applied to that extension of naval and military force in reliance on which the Turkish statesmen and their sovereign have stood out against the united demands of all those other Powers who signed the treaty of Paris.

I would not be extreme in visiting on Turkey the entire responsibility for these lapses in point of good faith and political discretion, especially when I look in vain for signs of any serious endeavour on the part of Europe to check the course of Turkish impolicy and neglect of the Porte's obligations during its fatal progress under the sway of Sultan Abdul-Aziz. But if I had heard that our Government had

withdrawn from their share in the engagements of Paris on the ground of the Porte's neglect of those reforms which the Sultan had accepted and proclaimed, my surprise, if any, would have been very moderate. That it was a duty on our part to insist on the full execution of the Imperial firman is, I think, unquestionable, though whether to the extreme of coercion must greatly depend on other and eventual circumstances. It is at all events difficult to conceive how any Christian Power could, without palpable discredit, throw its sword into the scale of Turkish inviolability so long as the Porte maintains a system of misrule the more to be deprecated in proportion to the increased sensibility of its victims on one side, and of their sympathisers on the other. Finally, it would seem idle to dwell on such considerations as might attach to the treaty of Paris, since recent events show but too clearly that its practical force, if it has not ceased entirely, has at least for a time shrunk into a state of abeyance.

The popular movement which took place about two years ago in the Herzegovina was only an active form of a chronic disease. The ever-growing proportions it has since taken are now culminating in open war on a large scale between the two Powers who perform the part of hotbed to the Eastern Question. Hostilities are not yet sufficiently advanced to admit of a deeper look into the mill-stream than that of a general conjecture suggested by a comparison of the means employed and the resources possessed by each of the two belligerents. The current notion that Russia is superior in the latter respect, and not improbably in the former also, may be not far from the truth. But something must be left for time to reveal, and perhaps there is more to be gained by reflecting on the past than by peering too soon into the gloom of futurity.

STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE.



## XII.

### TURKEY.—II.

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FALSE principles of government, corrupt motives of action inflamed by religious animosities, conflicting interests arrayed against each other, rooted prejudices, and anti-social manners, have concurred to place the Ottoman Empire on an inclined plane. The position is one of natural determination towards a state of exhaustive weakness. The progress of other States in knowledge and national development increases by comparison the dangers of that decline. It has increased them practically, as a long series of defeats and losses on the side of Turkey may serve to testify. The expansive energies of civilisation can no longer brook the inertness, and in some respects the exclusiveness, of a country so fertile in resources, so obstructively situated, and offering at the same time a field of almost boundless extent for remunerative enterprise. The problem which calls for solution is simply this: Can the strength of the Empire be so far restored by means consistent with the wants and spirit of the age as to preserve internal order and to command the respect of foreign Powers?

The incurables, who for such means look to the revival of Mohammedan convictions, must tell us by what process of faith, no longer entertained even in Turkey by reflecting or educated minds, can operate as the motive power of a government compelled by the conditions of its tenure to restrain the passions, and frequently to counteract the impulsions, of an ignorant and fanatical race. Under a system of administration thus inspired, religious belief

must evidently be the rule of right, and the measure of individual worth. How then would Jew and Christian fare both as to political rights and as to personal consideration? Would the peace and well-being of the Empire be secured by forcibly renewing the submission of one half of its population to the pride and bigotry of the other? Would there be "no complaining in the streets," no danger of resistance, no appeal to the foreigner, no resentment in Christendom? Is the war of Hellenic independence a fable, the chastisement inflicted on Damascus a dream? Are the Greeks less sensible than they were of degradation and oppression, or the nations of Europe more deaf to the claims of humanity and the sympathies of religion?

Another and ampler basis than that of an unsanctioned revelation is wanted for the reconstruction of a dilapidated empire. Where but in the elements of social harmony, correction of discord and decomposition, can such a foundation be discovered? That civilising process, which carries out materially and morally the benevolent purposes of Providence, and knits together the various classes and pursuits of mankind by the bonds of social interest, combines whatever is necessary for the external defence, internal welfare, and legitimate advancement of a constituted community. Religion, in respect of belief, like the action of the lungs, is involuntary, and therefore, however essential to moral, as breathing is to bodily health, is not in that sense properly a subject of legal enforcement on individuals as such, and still less a just obstacle to the freedom of legislative enactment in other matters. A body politic, the compound of individual men, partakes of their mutable and mortal nature. If linked inseparably to laws believed to be divine, and therefore unalterable, the interests of the community, which require change of law with change of circumstances, must, in the end, be seriously, perhaps even fatally, com-

promised. To this dilemma it would seem that the Turks are now reduced. They must either be content to govern on larger principles, with the advantage of extending proportionally their means of improvement and independence, or they must incur the necessary consequences of persisting in error, and thereby having to contend with the disaffection of their Christian subjects and the resentment of their Christian allies. Sultans may continue to be caliphs for their Mussulman subjects, but they must learn to act as sovereigns for the people at large.

The difficulties suggested by this view of the question are by no means so great as they may appear to those who have only a general acquaintance with Turkey, its empire, and its history. The Koran is far from being that inelastic code of laws which many suppose. It has long ceased to be an exact mirror of Islamism as practised by the Ottoman authorities. The difference which has perceptibly grown up between the letter and the practice of the law is not merely one of suspension, such as the disuse of hostilities for the propagation of the faith, but positively active, as in the case of treaties and alliances with Christian Powers. This primary departure from the system of policy prescribed by Islamism dates from the sixteenth century. Solyman the Magnificent and Francis the First of France first set the example of an alliance between the sovereign of the Turks and a Christian Power. The act was founded on mutual convenience suggested by their respective international positions at the time. It led to the establishment of similar relations between the Porte and other European Powers, to the reception of consuls in the outports of Turkey, and to the exercise of jurisdiction by them over their own fellow-subjects. It was the first link in a series of concessions which may be fitly called *extra-Koranic*, and which were gradually made, to meet the necessity, more and more felt

by the Porte, of obtaining a less insulated position relative to the States of Christendom.

Internal reforms were commenced in the same spirit towards the close of the last century by Selim, the last Sultan of that name. The Janissaries, excited no doubt by the Ulemahs, broke into open rebellion, and the reaction which followed cost the reforming Sultan both his throne and his life. Mustapha, who succeeded to the throne, was not more fortunate than his cousin. It was reserved for his brother Mahmoud to realise the plans of Selim, and to revenge that Sultan's death by the extermination of the Janissaries. This ill-disciplined and unmanageable militia was replaced by a regular army formed on the European model. The Sultan put forth all his energy for its completion; but the weakness of his empire, proved and increased by successive misfortunes—by the war with Russia which terminated in the treaty of Adrianople, by the independence of Greece which followed the battle of Navarino, and by the victorious progress of Ibrahim Pasha into Syria and Asia Minor—compelled him to enter into closer relations with Christian Europe. The proclamation of *Gulhané*, and the introduction of extensive reforms under the name of *Tanzimat-kairieh*, gave a solemn and imposing earnest of Mahmoud's sincerity. They laid the foundations of a real improvement in the Turkish administrative system, and more especially in the treatment of Rayahs, non-Mussulman subjects bound to pay a yearly poll-tax to the Grand Seignior. Further and more decided measures of reform were subsequently adopted. Those of a judicial character were not the least important. A court was established for the trial of civil causes between the Porte's subjects and foreigners. It was a mixed tribunal, taking cognisance more particularly of differences arising in trade and navigation. Its maxims of law and rules of procedure were

derived from Christian sources. Our leading principles and forms of trial, exclusive of juries, were even admitted by firman in some of the criminal courts; and at Constantinople, in the highest of those courts where Mohammedan law prevailed, our Consul-General was allowed to sit with the power of watching the proceedings, and staying for his assent the execution of judgment on behalf of British subjects brought to trial on capital charges.

To these beneficial innovations are to be added the establishment of lazarettos for quarantine against plague and cholera; the suppression of the negro slave-trade with a view to that of slavery; the abolition of torture and of capital punishment in cases of conversion from Islamism; and the recognition of Protestantism as one of the protected and established religions in Turkey.

During the Crimean war a notable enlargement took place in other branches of social progress, inconsistent, more or less, with the restrictions of Mussulman law, but required by the necessities of the Empire. Loans were raised at interest in foreign countries for the service of the State. The Porte's Christian subjects were released from the payment of tribute, and were declared to be admissible as privates and officers to the imperial army. Turkish battalions were placed under the command of British commanders, and British agents were allowed to raise levies among the Turks for an irregular military corps to be paid and officered by Her Majesty's Government. At one time the suburbs of Pera and Galata were held, in aid of the police, by detachments of the French and English armies. On the cessation of hostilities all previous reforms, together with important additions, were confirmed and declared by an imperial proclamation known as the *Hatt-y-homayoon*, solemnly promulgated, and inserted, as a fact, in the general treaty of peace. Among its new provisions were

two, in particular, characterised by a liberality which it would not be easy to surpass. By one the faculty of holding land in fee throughout Turkey was granted to foreign subjects, with a reserve of some preliminary arrangements. By the other both natives and foreigners were allowed full liberty of conscience in religious matters.

These are facts, and we are bound to give them our candid and serious attention. They remove a part of the difficulty which Islamism opposes in theory to the reformation of the Turkish Empire on European principles. They encourage a hope that the remaining obstacles may be gradually surmounted. Most of them show to demonstration that in Turkey, as elsewhere, custom and law must ultimately yield to consideration for the safety of the State. We are friends to the Sultan's Empire. We do not seek to overthrow or to undermine its dominant faith. We only desire that religion should cease to be so applied to worldly affairs as to render the administration of them ruinous to the public weal. We urge the expediency, and indeed the necessity, of carrying fully into effect those salutary reforms which have been long and strenuously recommended to the Sultan by his allies, which have been adopted by his supreme authority, proclaimed by him to the whole world, and recorded under the most solemn forms of international engagement. We desire, in other words, to obtain for the Porte a real instead of a fictitious independence—the well-grounded, durable respect, and not the mere precarious sufferance, of contemporary powers.

All classes of the population would gradually feel the benefit of a change, which could not fail to operate favourably on their interests in a national sense. Any discontents which may prevail among the Turks arise principally out of causes independent of their religious prejudices, though naturally seen in connection with them. A state of transi-

tion in matters of deep and extensive concern is always attended with inconvenience to many, with a dislocation of partial interests and a rupture of much that is sanctified, as it were, by habit and early associations. To halt between two systems instead of frankly adopting the one which on the whole is preferable, can have no effect but that of prolonging evils incident to both. Unfortunately such has been hitherto the conduct of the Turkish Government, excusable indeed in some respects, but far from being necessary.

Under the old system, confiscations, crown lands, royalties, property lapsing to the Sovereign, forced labour, offerings not quite voluntary, requisitions in kind, and other incidental sources of profit were auxiliary to the revenue derived from tithes, taxes, and customs. The Spahis and Timariotes, who held their lands on condition of military service, were bound, when called upon, to take the field armed and mounted at their own expense. On the extermination of the Janissaries in 1826, a regular army, as mentioned above, was formed by Sultan Mahmoud, and later a civil list was established in place of the crown lands and other imperial sources of revenue. Life, property, and honour were also secured by charter to subjects of all classes against the assaults of arbitrary power. The Sultan and his Government had in consequence to look exclusively to the exchequer for their ways and means in carrying on the administration, and providing for the peace, the defence, and general welfare of the Empire. Hence it became more than ever necessary that an improved system of finance should be adopted, and the collection of the taxes cleared of all those abuses and corrupt practices which at once oppressed the people and defrauded the treasury. A child may perceive that discontent, embarrassment, and ruin must be the necessary consequences of drying up the old sources of supply without opening new ones, of depriving

the dominant classes of their long-cherished privileges without enabling them to realise the compensations offered by a more liberal and productive course.

Respect for the Sultan, consideration even for his weaknesses, submission to his authority, nay, to his pleasure, are still universal among the Mussulman population. From time to time, and not unfrequently, there are disturbances, now in this, now in that province, but they arise nearly always from local causes, and are confined within narrow limits. Excesses may be committed by some body of insurgents; the magistrates may be overpowered; individuals may suffer, and the immediate object of aversion may be swept away. But after a time the Sultan's authority is sure to ride over all obstacles, and to restore the public peace with more or less severity and some feeble show of reparation. The army, inadequate as it is to the wants of the Empire, ill fed, ill clothed, and ill paid, thinned by frequent marches over miserable roads, and having no reason to rely upon its officers, rarely, if ever, fails to perform its duty. Discipline, though imperfect, gives it a constant advantage over the rude extempore levies opposed to its arms. The worst of it is that such occurrences tend more and more to exhaust the strength of the Empire by a twofold process. Parties brought locally into conflict wear each other down, and the Government, which finally reduces them to order, accomplishes its purpose at a loss, not easily repaired, in men and money. A despot's strength is the weakness of his subjects; that of a constitutional government resides in the wealth and goodwill of the people. Ill fares the country where neither strong hand nor willing heart is to be found.

The fortunes of the Turkish Empire, in their flow, are mainly to be ascribed to religious enthusiasm, military discipline, national character, unanimity of purpose, the confidence of success, submission to a single will, and also



to the inferiority of its opponents. Their decline ~~may be~~ generally accounted for by the progress of Christendom, and particularly of Northern Christendom, in the arts of war, in population, in produce, and in every branch of knowledge, by the natural consequences of error in policy, administration, and social manners, by the mutinous spirit of the Janissaries, by the enervating habits of the seraglio, and by the corrupt intrigues of adventurers at court and in office. Much, however, in the one period and in the other, belongs to the personal qualities of the Sultan, or of the principal depositary of his power. The nature of the government and the character of the people make it so. Mahomet, the conqueror of Constantinople, and his immediate successors are brilliant illustrations of the fact. Mahmoud, the present Sultan's father, ruled with power, and commanded general respect notwithstanding his losses, his reforms, his sanguinary executions, and the vile debaucheries which closed his life. His eldest son and successor fell into contempt through want of resolution and energy, although his reign, unsullied by any measures of injustice or cruelty, was marked, on the contrary, by a course of policy successful, on the whole, both at home and abroad. His failings were those of a gentle and generous disposition unsustained by that vigour of mind and body which the difficulties of his perilous station required. If, as there is room to hope, his younger brother, the reigning Emperor, should carry out the reforms and improvements adopted by Abdul-Medjid, with the energy displayed by Mahmoud, Turk and Christian, the Empire and its allies, would have reason to rejoice. Appearances are, so far, favourable to this expectation, and if it be true that Sultan Abdul-Aziz intends in good earnest to limit his connubial establishment to a single wife, the prospect may soon ripen into a reality. Economy would be the least advantage of

such a limitation. The morals and manners of the seraglio would undergo a transformation much to be desired. The example would operate most beneficially throughout the whole range of Turkish society. The harem would cease to be a curse, and a great step would be made towards an intermixture of classes. But we must be content to wait a while in suspense. It is not the first time that a new reign has commenced with a clearance in the palace. Four thousand ladies and attendant officers are described in the Turkish annals as having been dismissed on one occasion. A vast increase of paper currency and its intended application to the payment of the army are measures of ominous import. The dismissal of the late Grand Vizir in favour of the present incumbent is a very questionable move. Other personal changes in the administration have no distinct character, and, with the exception of Riza Pasha, may be referred to motives of mere convenience.

Reduction of expense is an excellent thing to begin with, especially after the measureless extravagance of the late reign. But much more is wanted. Economy itself, to be remedial, must be applied with judgment. It is said that even the army is to be reduced. Now, the army is already too small for the defence of the Empire. I repeat that it does not exceed a third of the numbers displayed on paper. It is not equal to the maintenance of internal order, except by harassing and wasteful exertions. Its increase is more to be desired than its diminution, and means for that purpose should be sought in other reductions, particularly in the reduction of salaries and pensions, and also in a more effective management of the revenue, including its collection and administration.

Be it remembered that the Sultan's dominions, whether we look to climate, soil, or position, are rich beyond conception in resources of every kind. We have only to name

the countries which are comprised within their limits, and every doubt on this point must vanish from our minds. The wonder is that regions so blessed with all varieties of produce, with climates so favourable to labour, with coasts so accessible to commerce, and with full experience of these advantages transmitted from age to age, should have been brought to such degradation at a period when other countries far less happily endowed by nature reached so great a height of prosperity and power. Mesopotamia, Egypt, Syria, the vast plains of Thessaly and Adrianople, those in Asia watered by the Hermus, the Mæander, the Cayster, the Caïcus, and the productive provinces extending on both sides along the Danube from Hungary to the sea—all these and many other districts of surpassing fertility are only waiting for the long-expected signal to enter upon a new career of industry, wealth, and glory. Let the doors be thrown open to the arts, the science, the capital of Europe; let the emulation of the natives be encouraged and their fortunes sufficiently protected; let the reforms to which the Imperial Government is pledged be put into a regular course of execution, and the most satisfactory results would be sure to follow. Even as it is, the Porte's revenue has increased by a fourth since the Crimean war, and the financial embarrassments which have accompanied that progress may be fairly attributed to extravagance, corruption, and mismanagement, or to the cost of putting down disturbances engendered by a vicious course of administration.

The reforms which are here recommended must be viewed as a whole in order to be fully appreciated. They are comprehensive in principle and also in application. They are by no means limited to the Christian subjects of the Porte. They are calculated to promote the welfare of all classes, whatever may be the separate creed of each. The imperial proclamation, in which the new concessions are embodied

together with the earliest, is a real charter of franchises, the *Magna Charta*, in a broader sense than ours, of the Turkish Empire. Honour to Sultan Abdul-Medjid who gave it, and to Reschid Pasha with whom its leading ideas originated ! The various provisions it contains may be severally classed under the following heads :—

- I. Confirmation of beneficial ordinances already proclaimed.
- II. Extension of previous concessions.
- III. Removal of existing abuses.
- IV. Securities for the observance of new measures.
- V. Improvements of a material kind.

The field, it must be allowed, is a wide one, and surely in its compartments there is no want either of liberality or of apparent sincerity. A system of reform which aims at the removal of all abuses, the perpetuation of all franchises, the fusion of all classes, the development of all resources, the entire liberty of public worship and of private conscience in religious matters, the extension and security of civil rights, and an enlarged intercourse with foreigners, can hardly fail to engage our sympathy, and, considering the difficulties which surround it in a country like Turkey, to command our admiration and hearty concurrence. We boast too much of the spirit of our age to be indifferent to one of its greatest and least expected achievements. Our free institutions, our Protestant faith, our commercial enterprise, our skill in manufactures, all these sources of our national greatness are deeply interested in the triumph of such principles over bigotry, ignorance, and corruption in one of their strongest and most extensive holds.

What our Mussulman allies now stand in need of is a practical application of those principles in full, with an earnest enforcement of corresponding measures. Unfortu-

nately fresh obstacles occur at this point. The Sultan looks to his ministers; the ministers look to each other. Some are restrained by the fear of responsibility, some by their personal interests; others have to contend with false impressions contracted in their youth, and others again with an indigenous love of ease and habitual self-indulgence.

Among those statesmen at the Porte who admit the necessity without promoting the progress of reform, no allegation is more common than the deficiency of suitable agents. There is no doubt truth, but there is also much exaggeration, in this plea. Men of sufficient ability are seldom wanting for the public service, when the authority under which they act is clear and determined in its views, and adequate motives for individual exertion are brought into play.

It will soon be forty years since the present era of Turkish reforms began. A new generation has sprung up within that period. The young men of Sultan Mahmoud's time have now attained the experience of age. Those who were only children then have already overstepped the half-way road of life. It would be strange indeed if there were none among them whose natural intelligence had taken the impress of the time, none who felt that in serving a reform government with zeal they could best fulfil their public duties and consult their own interests. Their minds have ripened in the warmth of new ideas; they have had access, in maturity, to broader avenues of knowledge than were open to their predecessors, who nevertheless sent out from their ranks the earliest instruments, the most active pioneers of reform. Between the two classes, the elder and the younger, a sufficient supply might surely be found, if not for giving full effect to all the ministerial offices, at least for conducting the principal departments, and setting an example of vigour and consistency to other branches of the government. A Turk of good manners, who can talk

French, who has visited the chief cities of Christendom, and has some acquaintance with European literature, is no longer, as in the last century, a phoenix or a black swan. The Greeks have ceased to monopolise the main channel of communication between the Porte and the foreign ambassadors at Constantinople. The functions of chief interpreter are performed by a Mussulman.

What serves to counteract the natural tendencies of so important a change is favouritism, which is still but too often the arbiter of public appointments in Turkey. This practice may be traced to three distinct sources. 1. The candidates for office receive their education in general either at the Porte or in the seraglio. 2. Their first appointment is made on the recommendation of some influential person at one of those two seats of power. 3. Their promotion is frequently the result of a similar exercise of patronage. The relations of patron and client, which formed so strong an element of public life in ancient Rome, survive to a certain degree at Constantinople. The great man is at times sustained by his political dependents, who, in turn, look up to him for the advancement of their fortunes. Official establishments, though of late curtailed, are still expensive, and the plurality of incumbents have little but their salaries and their expectations wherewith to support them. Debts are consequently incurred, and the bankers, who end, employ their credit, which is considerable, in keeping or reinstating in office their respective debtors. Hence a routine most favourable to misconduct, incapacity, and corruption; hence a discouragement to those who seek to rise by honest means and honourable exertions; hence an assurance that no amount of disgrace will permanently exclude the most undeserving characters from office and power. Such pashas as Riza and Saffeti must laugh at being dismissed, since, however clear their delinquency, they are allowed to keep

their ill-gotten spoils, with the certainty of returning to office at no distant period, and in the enjoyment meanwhile of colossal pensions.

There is much, we must confess, in these abuses to dishearten the advocates of Turkish revival. But they are not irremediable, and other countries have succeeded in throwing off the same impediments. Even here, in our own country, the struggle of private interest with public spirit was long and anxious. It survived both the Reformation and the Revolution. It was a cloud on our expanding prospects in the last century. It required the resolution, the integrity, and the genius of a Burke to check its progress; and even now we look for its death-blow to a doubtful experiment—that of our competitive examinations.

If, in this respect, we are better, on the whole, than those who went before us, what securities have we against the dangers of a relapse? The answer is obvious. We are less exposed to temptation, and we act under the control of public opinion. The servants of the State, whatever their rank or denomination, are regularly if not abundantly paid, and an act of peculation brought home to the delinquent would, at least, be stamped with ignominy and hopeless dismissal from office. Appointments also are made in the public service on sounder principles and under a stricter responsibility. The Turks, it is true, have no parliament, and still less a parliament composed of individuals responsible to a popular constituency. But they have a sovereign whose power is absolute, whose interest is that the Empire should be honestly served, and who has no aristocratic, municipal, or party combinations to manage. In fact, without the immediate sanction of the Sultan, no issue of money, no official appointment is made; no act of administration, no decision of council, no sentence of criminal justice, goes into effect. The laws against malversation,

bribery, and corruption are stringent, and to every breach of them a penalty, more or less severe, is attached.

In aid of the Sultan there is a Privy or Cabinet Council for affairs of state, whether internal or foreign. There is also a more comprehensive council, having judicial as well as deliberative powers, and comprising, together with the Grand Mufti and others of the Ulemah, most of the principal functionaries. To these may be added a Board of Reform, whose president is a member of the administration, and occasionally, under urgent circumstances, a Council of Notables convened by supreme authority from the provinces and in part elected there. However, in each province there is a separate council for local affairs under the presidency of the respective pashas. In these assemblies the elective principle is in some degree employed, and a representative of each non-Mussulman community sits among the members.

The pashas are no longer invested, as of old, with plenary powers. They are now little more than civil commissioners. The troops are placed under a military commander, and the provincial revenue is administered by a separate authority. No capital sentence can be carried into effect without a special order from Constantinople. This new distribution of power, though doubtless in some respects useful, has the drawback of leaving too much in the hands of the council, whose leading members are men of influence in their neighbourhood, swayed by local interests, indifferent, if not hostile, to the imperial policy, and capable at times of giving law to the pasha.

A surer and stronger link is wanted between the supreme government and the provincial authorities, and such a link might perhaps be found without disturbing the present divisions of the Empire. The existing pashaliks might be grouped into clusters determined by territorial conformation or by local convenience, and each of the clusters might be



superintended by a Governor-General or Lord High Commissioner, representing the Sultan, and enjoying the full confidence of his government. Examples of this kind of delegation are to be found in Turkish history. One of them has lately been given in the person of Fuad Pasha, who, under peculiar circumstances, was invested with extraordinary powers for the restoration of order in Syria. Another took place a few years before, when the two adjacent provinces of Thessaly and Epirus were united for a time under the administration of a single pasha, who in earlier days would probably have received the appropriate and well-known title of Bey-ler-Bey, or Lord of Lords. There would be little difficulty in arranging a sufficient control for the exercise of so high a trust, and the body of Turkish statesmen would not be required to supply more than twelve or fifteen individuals capable of fulfilling its duties, and giving thereby a general and uniform effect to the Sultan's beneficent intentions.

The execution of such a plan might in time be greatly assisted by opening a wider field of instruction to candidates for public employment. The first step has been taken in this direction. A college, founded by the government, exists in the principal suburb of Constantinople. The students are partly Christian and partly Mussulman. They are brought up together on equal terms. The institution was originally a school of medicine. It has been expanded into larger proportions, and may be said to contain the rudiments of an university. No principle stands in the way of its further extension. As a model for similar foundations in the chief provincial cities, its importance can hardly be overrated.

I have already intimated that, in my opinion, the Turkish army, far from being too large for the wants of the country, stands rather in need of a considerable increase, with reference

at least to the numbers actually enrolled. The objections are not entirely of a financial character. The conscription operates on the Turkish population alone, and the supply from that quarter is not equal to the demand. This deficiency has been felt for some years, and it is to all appearance a growing evil. How is it to be supplied if not by recruiting among those portions of the people who, on religious grounds, have been hitherto exempted from military service? This idea has been adopted by the Porte, and made acceptable to the Christians by substituting a war-tax for the degrading *haratsch*, and levying it on all religious classes alike. But the egg has been addled in the hatching. The Christians complain of the new tax as pressing unfairly on them, and as no arrangements have yet been made for placing them as soldiers on a proper footing, the army is still dependent on its one declining source of recruitment.

Whatever may be hereafter the composition of the army, its numbers cannot be increased without a corresponding increase of expense. On this account, as well as on others, it is evident that measures calculated to remove financial abuses, and to render taxation more productive, stand foremost in the line of reform. Retrenchment and economy are the best, and indeed indispensable, starting-points. They alone can at present obtain, for any security the Porte could offer in raising money on loan, that confidence which might reopen the money markets of Europe to her proposals. The pump must have water to make it work. The first remedial operations in finance would be attended with a stoppage of the customary expedients, and it is difficult therefore to imagine how the curative process could be effected without a temporary accommodation. Ten years ago this harbour of refuge was closed to the Porte by traditional scruples, which subsequently gave way to pressure, as other mistaken

notions will also give way to a similar force of circumstances.

Here, as on other points, much, no doubt, is wanted. But the resources are natural; the obstacles are conventional. Opinion works in such a manner as to bring out the former, and to test the latter by their actual utility. Things deemed impracticable have come into everyday use. The progress of improvement is no less rapid than extensive.

It was during the Crimean war that strangers commissioned by foreign governments were first allowed to take part in the Porte's financial deliberations. They had to contend with much jealousy and many prejudices. They were often baffled in their researches; and if they did any good, it was all but limited to the prevention of evil. The Porte has now accepted the services of two gentlemen who are actually clerks in the British Treasury, and to them, in honourable reliance on a friendly government, the mysteries of Turkish finance are said to be fairly unfolded. Even to those who have watched at hand the course of events in Turkey, such changes appear little short of miraculous. They are earnest of further advancement, and seem to forbid the surrender of a single hope.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that nothing has yet been done except on paper. In every department some practical steps have been taken more or less in the right direction. Progression languishes rather from moral than from material causes, less from want of will in the government than from the temperament of individuals. The "*haul of all*," so well known in our navy, the "*strong pull, long pull, and pull all together*," so potent in a British rowing match, have still to be impressed on our Ottoman friends. In every great enterprise, energy, method, system, concurrence, are needed for success. In Turkey, as now

circumstanced, and more perhaps than elsewhere, these qualities of national movement have to be sustained, if not inspired, from without. Happily for the Turkish Empire, sufficient means and motives for giving in a friendly spirit the requisite impulsion to its endeavours are no longer out of reach. The principal States of Christendom are solemnly pledged to support the integrity of that Empire, and to regard it as a member of what is rather affectedly styled the "great European family." Together they are capable of urging their joint counsels on the Porte without the danger to its independence which might accompany the single interference of a neighbouring and rival power. Supposing their views to be honest, and their recommendations to agree with the Porte's declared principles, the pressure thus exerted would be no less safe than useful. Were interested motives to prevail in secret with one or more of them, the vigilance of England would not go to sleep, and the Porte's position would not be worse than if it were one of political estrangement and insincere profession. Union, moreover, though perhaps a mere show, would repress any tendency to foul play by making its exposure more discreditable and offensive. It would also be unreasonable to expect the best results from our advice when tendered with the twofold advantage of inspiring confidence as British, and commanding attention as European. The treaty of peace, which guards the Porte expressly against foreign interference as between the Sultan and his subjects, would be anything but satisfactory if it were held to preclude the Sultan's allies from insisting on the enforcement of those reforms which have been adopted freely by him as of vital importance to his Empire. Who will deny that the continued neglect of that duty exposes them more and more to the perils and sacrifices attendant, under their existing engagements, on its dissolution, whether by force or intrigue?

Granted that the prospect of a diplomatic conference installed at Constantinople is by no means attractive. But the advantage or, it may be, the necessity, when weighed against the inconvenience, will be found to preponderate. Meanwhile such conferences as may serve to patch up a local or passing disturbance abound. We are but lately relieved from one, the parent of numberless protocols, in Syria. The affairs of Montenegro, those of the Danubian principalities, have likewise, in turn, been subjects of European deliberation. We know not how soon or where the kites may be again collected by a massacre or an insurrection.

It were well to bear in mind that such occasional meetings have also their portion of inconvenience and risk. Their failure is discreditable; the effect of their success, at best, transient and partial. The evils they are meant to correct are themselves the offspring of one pervading evil, the source of which is Constantinople. In cases of sickness, consultations are not of good omen; but at times they cannot be avoided, and then it is usually thought best to call them where the patient resides, and not on the spot where his fever was caught or his leg fractured.

In these high matters, to which the principal Powers of Europe habitually and necessarily direct their attention, although the interest, the legitimate interest, is common, and the right equal, our own government occupies a peculiar position, comparatively advantageous, but also, in proportion to the advantage, responsible. The causes of this are manifest. Of all the Powers, Great Britain has most to lose by the inertness and decay of the Ottoman Empire, and least to gain by its dismemberment. Though her course of policy may at times give umbrage to the Porte, the circumstances in which she is placed, and the character of our institutions, exempt her from its mistrust. Others may be

more feared, and consequently more favoured, by the Turkish authorities; but confidence and goodwill depend less on fear than on hopes and sympathies.

The subject in hand is so large, its bearings so multiplex, and the questions it embraces so momentous, that even in this rapid sketch of it there may be enough to weary, if not to bewilder, the most patient of readers. We never thought of bringing all its elements, however briefly, within so narrow a compass; and even now we do not pretend to more than a very light notice of two or three outstanding points, which ought not to be entirely overlooked.

Authors, in seeking to explain the decline of Turkish power, have noticed two practices in particular as helping greatly to accelerate it. One, which we have already touched upon, is the debasement of the coinage. The other is the exclusion of the Imperial Princes from all share in public business. The discredit, uncertainty, and temptation to fraud, which attend the former illusion, have at all times and in all countries produced, more or less, the same deplorable effects. Our own history may be quoted to confirm the truth of this remark. A prominent example is offered by Froude in his account of the financial embarrassments which occurred under the Protectorate of Somerset. Some of us can personally remember with what determination Parliament, on the report of the Bullion Committee in 1816, enacted at every hazard the renewal of cash payments at the Bank.

With respect to the princes, it stands to reason that the restrictions to which they are condemned must operate with twofold venom upon the State. The jealousy which keeps them spell-bound in the seraglio hoodwinks their understandings, and renders the want of knowledge an heirloom in the ruling family, at the same time that it confirms their imperial keeper in those habits of indolence and self-indul-

gence which the dread of competition and popularity on their side might otherwise counteract. It tells with unusual force in a country where so much depends on the personal acquirements of the sovereign, and at a period when every government is expected to give proof of qualities commensurate with the wants of its people and the progress of its rivals. A word would suffice to remove this nightmare from the palace, and its consequences from the Empire.

It would certainly require more than a word to redress the defects of the currency. But the temporary sacrifice essential to that object would be overpaid by its results, and a real economy, such as now, it appears, is in progress, followed by other productive reforms, and sustained by the concurrent action of friendly Powers, would go far to revive the credit and open the resources of the Porte to an indefinite extent.

Those to whom every molehill is a mountain, every redoubt an impregnable fortress, may fancy that the greatest success in these respects would have little or no effect—if any, a disastrous one—on that diversity of races and consequent opposition of feelings and interests which make the Turkish Empire a hotbed of internal dissension. That there, as elsewhere, difficulty and danger exist in circumstances of social antagonism, cannot be fairly denied; but candour, while making the admission, is entitled to dissent from its exaggeration. In their days of prosperity, the most enlightened of Turkish ministers might reasonably have opposed any serious relaxation of the Mussulman system. It was sufficient for their purpose that all went on as usual, and that no defeat or deficit, insurrection or calamity, was likely to throw more than a passing shadow on the stability of the Empire. Turks were Turks, and rayahs rayahs. Both were to move invariably in their separate spheres; and if Christian heads were exposed to Turkish sabres, it was natural that they should be occasionally cut off. But the

successors of those statesmen have no such luxury to enjoy. They are embarked on a current, generated by false principles and vicious courses, which threatens to sweep them into ruin—government, religion, empire, and all. It is only by straining or rowing strenuously against the flood that they can hope to escape. Their best exertions may ultimately fail; but, taken in the right direction, they offer good chances of safety, retarding meanwhile the consummation to be dreaded, and softening the approaches to what in the end may prove inevitable.

This for the worst. But the danger itself is far less considerable than might be supposed at a distance. Numerous, and at heart disaffected, as the Sultan's non-Mussulman subjects are, they have by no means the force either of union or of endurance. Their separation into different classes on the ground of race or creed is evidently a source of weakness to them. They have little sympathy for each other. They are rivals for Turkish favour, and in some respects antagonistic among themselves. What they have most in common is the habit of submission to Turkish rule. Neither Greek, nor Armenian, nor Slavonian can hope to occupy a throne left vacant by the professor of Islamism. Each class in the supposed case would probably consent more cheerfully to the Sultan's authority than accept the rule of an adverse Christian sect. The Christians, in proportion as the Turks extend the circle of their privileges, and treat them with forbearance and consideration, have less to stimulate their longing for independence, and less to raise them above the dread of their long-established conquerors. On the same account their hold upon the sympathies of Christendom, and the confidence they might derive from that source, are greatly attenuated. Besides, the weight of the Ottoman sceptre has never pressed upon them by an immediate contact with the whole



surface of their everyday life. From the time of the conquest they have been allowed in some important respects to manage their own affairs. Even the collection of the *haratsch*, before the abolition of that tax, was entrusted to their own magistrates. The amount to be levied on each district was fixed by the Porte, or, it might be, by the pasha; but the assessment was regulated by the elders or notables of each religious community. What they most felt, and what in reality they had most to complain of, was the arbitrary abuse of power, the unauthorised exaction, the oppressive or humiliating treatment of individuals. But all these motives to revolt have been gradually dispelled, and are more likely to die away from want of fuel than to gather fresh strength from an increase of liberty and the prospect of further improvement.

More, much more, might be written on this inexhaustible theme. What is written already might have been more judiciously treated, more clearly developed, more ably compressed. Writer and reader have, nevertheless, travelled on together, and have now reached, not indeed the terminus, but a station where they may conveniently take breath, and review, as from some elevated point, the various stages of their road. The object of the journey is not an idle one. Its character is serious. It cannot be dismissed from thought like a railway excursion or a dissolving view. Let us, before we part, compare notes, and determine, if possible, whether from argument and statement, as here set forth, we are warranted in drawing conclusions on which our minds may rest with a certain amount of conviction, and whether we are entitled, in conscience, to wish that our convictions should pass, as eventual rules of action, into the minds of others more powerful than ourselves.

Has it been fairly established in the preceding pages that we have, as a nation, strong motives, continually in opera-

tion, and founded on our own immediate interests, for maintaining and improving our friendly relations with Turkey; that a considerable and growing portion of our trade is derived from the Turkish dominions; that, from a political point of view, we have much to apprehend from their decline or dissolution; and that our communications by steam and telegraph with India and our immense possessions there are dependent on the goodwill and protection of the Ottoman Government?

In the next place, are we satisfied that it has been our policy and also our practice, from an early period, to cultivate friendly relations with the Porte? Have we not in later years, and in critical emergencies, either hastened to her succour by means of counsel, mediation, and even occasionally by active assistance, or taken part, however reluctantly, in coercive measures calculated to bring her into a state of political harmony with the Powers of Christendom?

Thirdly, is it not proved that, as one of them, we have given our formal guaranty for the independence and integrity of the Sultan's dominions, and incurred thereby a positive obligation to redeem our pledge, when called upon, at the cost or immediate risk of British treasure and blood?

Fourthly, is it not manifest that, whether from within or from without, the Turkish Empire is exposed to an imminent danger of falling into confusion and becoming eventually a prey to the ambition of its most powerful neighbours—of neighbours liable at any time to become adverse to our policy and jealous of our prosperity?

Fifthly, has it not been shown that Turkey, notwithstanding its many causes of weakness and social embarrassment, possesses a fund of resources which have only to be worked by means within reach in order, as a consequence of the process, to retard indefinitely, if not to avert entirely,

the impending catastrophe? May it not be added, with truth, that the obstacles to improvement are so far from being irremovable that many of them, and some in appearance the most obdurate, have already yielded to the pressure of necessity and the evidence of facts?

Sixthly, can it be denied at the same time that the Turkish Government has displayed, together with a sense of its weakness, an utter incapacity for extricating itself, without support and assistance, from the dangers which surround it; that, left to its own unaided exertions, it has no reasonable prospect of escape; that even now it depends for existence on the forbearance of the Christian Powers; and that we are bound in duty no less than entitled to require, as the price of our generosity, its strenuous enforcement of such measures as are necessary, according to its own proclaimed and recorded confession, to sustain its vitality, and to justify the responsible confidence of its allies?

If, as it would seem, there can be only one true answer to these questions, the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from them may be left with safety to the deliberate judgment of the country. The interests of our trade with Turkey, Persia, and the Danube; those of our political power on the shores of the Euxine, the Archipelago, and the Mediterranean; those, again, of our direct communication with India—to say nothing of China and Australia—are palpably concerned in the decision. Are we to relinquish, when it is most needed, a policy dating from one of the best periods of our history? Are we to surrender a position acquired by the exertions of our diplomacy and by the triumphs of our arms? Are we to wait with fettered limbs and bandaged eyes for that solution which we have most reason to deprecate of the Eastern Question? Or are we, in a wiser and nobler spirit, to confront the peril, which hitherto we

have never ceased to acknowledge—to employ at once, though with some inconvenience and doubt, the means required for meeting it with effect, and to do our best, without hesitation, for diverting a calamity which, be it far or near, must be attended in its consummation with evils of the greatest magnitude?

A straight, an obvious course lies open before us. It is recommended no less by a consistent view of our interests than by rights and obligations pressed home on our sense of duty by a just apprehension of worse. We are free to enter upon it, or rather to persist in following it, without any immediate sacrifices, even of a financial kind, and with no greater difficulties to encounter than must ever attend upon a course of diplomatic action limited by its object rather than by time, and applied, in concurrence with other Powers, less in earnest, perhaps, than ourselves, but engaged ostensibly as we are, to the complicated affairs of a distant empire and a mistrustful government.

Should doubts remain, let the alternative, such as it is described above, be fairly and fully weighed. Let it be weighed together with our special engagements, and let this additional consideration be thrown into the scale. A course of policy which has for its object the maintenance of peace by means of an improved system of administration throughout the Turkish Empire, and of the concurrent operation of the Porte and her allies, even were it to fail as to the ultimate results, would, in its progress, work, beneficially for Europe, to the relief of millions who are still suffering under the joint effects of ignorance, misgovernment, and fanaticism.

It is reasonable to presume that, under Providence, every great depositary of power in this world has its mission. The Crown and Parliament of England have theirs, a proud and also a responsible one. It is the mission of knowledge,

freedom, and humanity, issuing from the highest of sources, and hallowed throughout its course by Christian love. Power is the instrument of our practical fidelity to its duties. Let us take heed. Indifference to the end may involve a forfeiture of the means.

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*June 18, 1877.*

Such are the opinions which I threw upon paper some four or five years after the termination of the Crimean war, of that war which rescued Turkey from the domineering pretensions of Russia by means of auxiliary forces derived from England and France, placing in a strong light both the weakness of the Ottoman Empire and the strength of those motives which brought the two allies to its support, with the moral or more than the moral concurrence of other European Powers. In a general sense, and from my point of view, those opinions have undergone no change. But circumstances have not maintained the same consistency. Turkey, instead of calling out the political sympathies of Western Europe as a State threatened with loss of independence by the demands of an ambitious neighbour, has now exposed itself to just reproach by causing a great disturbance, attributable in its origin to the Porte's oppressive principles of government, and later to its haughty rejection of those salutary counsels which it received from all its co-signatories of the treaty of Paris. It has, moreover, incurred the imminent peril attached to open unaided war with a contiguous empire far more powerful than its own in every respect, and whose eventual triumph might entail disastrous consequences on the greater part of European Christendom. There may have been, and probably were, intrigues from without which ripened into insurrection the discontent of Bosnia and Herzegovina; but surely it required a deep

sense of misrule on the part of a suffering and unarmed population to lay itself bare, by acts of disobedience, to the rigours of an unsparing and fanatical despotism. The reign of Sultan Abdul-Aziz gained no favour even from those of his subjects who were of His Majesty's own race and religion, nor can it be forgotten that in his ill-omened time the neglect of promised reforms went hand in hand with the acquisition of millions obtained from the wealth of Christendom, and cancelled by an act of indefinite bankruptcy.

It can hardly be denied that facts of this kind weigh heavily in the balance when the Porte's engagements, distinctly implied, though perhaps not always formally expressed, are put into one scale, and its fragments or shadows of performance into the other. The marked disproportion between them may well throw doubt on the Porte's appeal to the beneficial clauses of the treaty of Paris. If any degree of validity may still be ascribed to that treaty, it cannot with justice or reason be made to bear upon those securities which all Europe, so to say, has deemed it necessary to demand for the complete execution of the proclaimed reforms, and the restoration of peace on solid grounds in the disturbed provinces. Whatever may be the results of the war\* which is now unhappily in progress on a colossal scale, the mediating Powers have respected the permanent independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire. The temporary interference of foreign agents with the internal arrangements of the Porte must of course be unpleasant to the Sultan and his Mussulman subjects; but its necessity, supposing its real character to be such, originates with the Turkish authorities, and has for its object the tranquillity of Europe and the welfare of Turkey itself.

The capacity of Mussulman Turkey for reforms may not

\* Russia declared war against Turkey April 24th, 1877.

be equal to its need of them, but it has always appeared to me sufficient for the introduction of a real and progressive improvement. On this account it is the more to be regretted, and also the more to be resented, that nearly a score of years from the treaty of Paris, so remarkable for increase of revenue and freedom from disturbance, should have left such scanty traces of advancement and good faith, and such ample proofs of impolicy and extravagance. How could Austria, whose territory bordered on the insurgent district and was peopled with numerous sympathisers, look with indifference on a movement so likely to compromise her interests, and, in the probable event of its expansion, to produce a mischievous excitement elsewhere? Were not the elements of that political disease, the Eastern Question, discernible in the first local symptoms of resistance to authority? Was it to be expected that the insurgents would consent to lay down their arms, and resume their previous habits of obedience, on a simple assurance of pardon and better treatment for the future? Sympathies naturally sprang up on both sides of the frontier. Popular enthusiasm impelled the Christian Governments at the same time that its effects alarmed the Porte, so that, while the pressure from without increased, the resistance within hardened into positive refusal. In proportion to their determination to reject the demand of securities, the Turks abounded in professions and enactments of reform. They replied to the armed menace of Russia by an exhaustive display of force, they threw down the barrier of creed, and united the various classes of population into one patriotic mass under the common appellation of Ottomans, represented by a Parliament composed of two houses—a Senate and Deputies. Great and radical indeed is this change in the institutions of Turkey. Can it succeed? can it last? are the obvious questions which it suggests. A mixture of

antagonistic elements shaped by a flash of urgency, and forced at once into action under circumstances severely trying, may well be viewed with surprise and doubt. The sincerity of its principal author is to all appearance unshaken, although it was probably hurried into existence as a refuge from the importunity of foreign dictators. There are those who would have given it a fair chance by leaving the Porte, as it were, on trial for a reasonable time after the departure of the ambassadors from Constantinople, and reserving the right of their Governments to interfere afresh upon the evident failure of the new system. Such a course would certainly have postponed the war, and perhaps might even have prevented it from ever breaking out. Come what may short of a Turkish dismemberment, the work of Midhat Pasha is not likely to pass away without leaving salutary traces of its temporary existence. The Sultan's uncontrolled authority, the inveterate corruptions of the metropolitan Ministry, and the cat-and-dog relations between Mussulmans and Christians can never be the same as heretofore.

Although it is not my intention to censure bygone transactions, I cannot entirely suppress the regret with which I look back on some of the incidents preliminary to the present deplorable war. What, for instance, could be more ominous of failure than the want of union among the mediating Powers from the very commencement of their proceedings? What more offensive to the Turks than the unscrupulous hostilities of Servia and Montenegro? What more disreputable both to Turkey and to Europe than the manner in which the convicted perpetrators of the Bulgarian outrages escaped from the pursuits of justice? What more injudicious than the unyielding obstinacy with which the Porte repelled the modified counsels of its allies, and refused to settle the terms of a mutual disarmament with



Russia by means of an accredited representative at St. Petersburg?

No doubt the Eastern Question is a network of difficulties and dangers, affecting very important interests, exciting violent passions, and even when lulled into a state of rest liable to break out again with ruinous activity. The elements of which it is composed explain its character. A northern Power, possessing a vast extent of territory, and capable of bringing a most formidable array of forces into the field, presses down to the south upon an empire which, though apparently verging towards its ruin, comprises whole regions of splendid fertility and the choicest positions for sway and trade. The former is thought to covet, at the very least, some important portions of its neighbour's dominions, and to seek the accomplishment of its views by an intriguing policy in times of peace, and by downright conquest in times of war. The Porte facilitates its rival's success by a system of misrule which paralyses its natural advantages, and comes in aid of strong original causes to produce a spirit of disaffection among the majority of its subjects. Russia, on the other hand, is thereby furnished with millions of partisans from within the Turkish Empire, and the energies of an impulsive sympathy from without. Of late, indeed, she has drifted into a position of which she has availed herself to assume the guise of Europe's champion, and at the same time to drive the Sultan into a single-handed war fraught with chances fatal to his independence. Other European Powers, for various reasons and in different degrees, see at all times much to alarm them even in the prospect of a rupture between the two parties. They know that the small dark cloud on the horizon may surge into a sweeping tempest, and they must lose no time in determining when and by what means they may have to protect their own particular interests even to

the extremity of war. Of such inducements to hostile action, England may be said to have the lion's share. Whatever consideration obliges her to rest her sheet anchor on peace, she may be carried into stormy latitudes by resistless forces incidental to a wide expanse of surface on land as well as at sea.

We of the British Isles have to thank Providence for being still able to hold to the anchor of peace. We are declared neutrals. But the contest which is now raging in the home of the Eastern Question throws all generalities into the shade. Public curiosity fastens eagerly on news from the seat of war, whether it be on the banks of the Danube or among the mountains of Armenia. Speculation on tip-toe strains its sight to catch a glimpse of things beyond our actual horizon, and the dimness of the objects would seem to sharpen the appetite for discovery. No wonder that such should be the case. The mill-stone is accessible to all, and I cannot deny my wish, like that of thousands, to penetrate its mysteries, and also, unlike that of many, my sense of inability to reach their place of seclusion. What opinions I may venture to entertain are at the service of my readers. The first to be mentioned turns upon the supposition that Russia is bent on something more than the redress of grievances in European Turkey. If so, the present appearances warrant a conjecture that the intended passage of the Danube is a demonstration, and the incursion from Circassia the reality. Imagine the Russians to advance so far on the two lines of invasion as to bring the Porte to terms. What more plausible than for them to say: "We are content to redeem our pledge in Europe. We ask nothing there for ourselves; but we are entitled to a fair indemnity for the cost and sacrifices of war, and on this ground we propose to retain a part or the whole of territory in Asia already won and actually occupied by our

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n of Erzeroum, and with it the entrance of the  
Euphrates Valley, which terminates only in the Gulf of  
Persia. There are politicians who see in such an acquisition by Russia a danger which threatens our Indian dominions, and consequently raises the question of what should be done to counteract it. An answer may perhaps be suggested by the map. Any one who consults that oracle will perceive that distance alone presents a serious difficulty to hostile enterprise from that quarter; and surely, if we had to contend with an enemy in the Indian or Persian seas, our resources in point of force, recruiting, or provisioning, would not be inferior to his. As for the Suez Canal, it may be that our possession of shares would not preclude the necessity of employing force for the defence of its freedom; but it may perhaps fairly be said that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," especially as we may reckon confidently on having all neutral nations on our side when called upon to act on its behalf. We must not, however, lose sight of the facilities to be derived from the river by an invading army, nor of the effect which the possession of Armenia might have in helping to cover the line of advance from the Caspian Sea into Central Asia.

Other more exposed interests may be brought into jeopardy by the existing war, should it take a turn decidedly favourable to Russia. The fettered navigation of the Danube, an indefinite occupation of the befriended provinces in Turkey, a free passage of the Dardanelles, and even the appropriation of Constantinople itself, are all contingencies which the negotiation of a peace dictated by Russian victory might raise into dilemmas of the most formidable kind. More than one question is involved in the solution they require. Which of them, if any, would leave us no choice but that of hostile resistance? Which

would entitle us to the co-operation of one or more auxiliaries? Could we enter upon hostilities with a reasonable prospect of success, and with no sacrifice greater than what the fruits of success would repay? It is clear that not one of the enumerated conditions could be accepted by the Porte without more or less injury, commercial, territorial, or political, to the interests of other States, and more particularly, in some respects, to those of Great Britain. The mere introduction of Russian armed vessels into the Archipelago and Mediterranean from the Black Sea would make a very objectionable alteration in the relative position of other naval Powers, and be a constant source of anxiety and peril to the Ottoman authorities. The transfer of Constantinople itself to the possession of Russia would manifestly place the adjacent straits at the mercy of a Power whose maxims of trade and exclusiveness of policy might at any time hamper, if not suspend, the trade of Europe with the countries which they enclose. Questions of vital importance had better rest with governments and representative assemblies, but private individuals may fairly, and sometimes even usefully, hazard an opinion on exceptional points. In the present instance two things are clear to the commonest understanding; the one as pressing on every government concerned, the other as touching all that is most valuable to every inhabitant of a contented country. Every nerve should at once be strained to prepare for the expected crisis, not only by readiness of measures and means within, but by union of counsels and concert of operations without. The other indispensable duty is to ascertain, as nearly as possible, the amount of effective means for a successful issue. If there be one proposition more obvious than another, it is that war, at the best, carries with it such great sacrifices that to undertake it without necessity or calculation is akin to madness. History records the con-

sequences of neglect in these matters, and our recent proclamation of present neutrality seems to warrant the expectation of a deliberate but unfettered policy in this country.

If the Russians, like other nations of the high north, have a natural leaning towards the sun and the brighter regions of the earth, we have the assurances of their sovereign and his ministers that they confine their views of success in Turkey to points on which they have already in principle the concurrence of Europe; and it may be found wiser to display our reliance on their sincerity, while we observe their movements with vigilance, and prepare to counteract any failure in their promises.

STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE.

# XIII.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS :

AND HOW THEY MAY BE MAINTAINED FOR THE BEST  
INTERESTS OF MANKIND.

(OCTOBER, 1877.)

THERE is little risk of contradiction in stating that the international relations of the civilised world were never so extensive as they are at the present time, never perhaps more important, or more liable to serious disturbance. In countries previously well-peopled, a great increase of population is almost everywhere more or less discerned. Turkey, if not a solitary exception, is at least the only part of Europe or Asia where any marked decrease of population is recognised by statistical writers. It was natural that commerce, if not obstructed by special causes, should expand in something of the same proportion. Science, exploring with signal success the powers of nature, has operated in the same direction. The elements, multiplied in number, have been enlisted in its service. Steam and rail unite to facilitate the personal intercourse of the various races of mankind, and the products of their labour and skill are conveyed from one region to another with unusual speed and reciprocal advantage. Japan is no longer an isolated group of islands. China is no longer open only to foreign trade. The Celestial Empire has felt the power of European armies even to the submission of its capital and the surrender of a portion of its dependencies. Australia, that vast insular

continent, New Zealand, and other inferior but not unimportant holds of savage life, have been made to teem with civilised inhabitants, and greater still is the development of the divine command to "increase and multiply" in those "wilds immeasurably spread" the discovery of which we owe to the genius of one undaunted navigator.

If we turn from the mere extension of these communities which stand in reciprocal relations with each other, we can hardly fail to perceive what vital interests are involved in the maintenance of those relations on sound principles and durable forms. Political security, commercial prosperity, the power which upholds a state, and the trade which more or less in every country nourishes the arts and comforts of peace, supplies the sinews of war, and enlarges the circle of beneficence, are bound up in great measure with external ties of a kindred and interchangeable nature. We are living in an age of wonderful approximation, if that word may suffice to express the grand result of steam-engines, electric wires, and submarine telegraphs. The London merchant seizes a favourable opportunity, and from his counting-house at Gracechurch Street or King's Arms Yard despatches an order for sale or purchase to his correspondent at Rio, Cincinnati, or Benares. Scarcely has he had time to sleep off the effects of an unrestricted dinner when he learns by telegraph that his purpose is fulfilled, and, it may be, another thousand added to the million in prospect. The State official, whatever may be his department, is not behind the merchant in rapidity of despatch. He transmits a command or instruction to some remote settlement or theatre of war, and decides the fate of an army or the fortunes of a colony in less time than the mails used to consume in passing from York to London. Far more than this, I hope not to err in stating that convivial hilarity has been hushed into astonishment by the communication of a

message and reply which have traversed the Atlantic between the first spoonful of soup and the last glass of claret.

Advantages of so remarkable a kind are now in many countries at the disposal of individuals and their Governments. Hence a large increase of international transactions, and on critical occasions of no small rivalry in using the quickest means of promoting their success.

It happens unfortunately that the extension and importance of international relations carry with them a proportionate liability to disturbance. In matters of trade there must be competition, and competition is a fertile source of enmity and wrong, of obstructive statutes and fraudulent devices. Nations are brought into contact, contention, and hostility on grounds of conflicting interest or questionable right. No distance prevents such incidental collisions. The consciousness of power engenders arrogance, which stimulates pretension and disdains compromise. Prosperity in its course of growth is apt to be daring and combative. The despot whose habit is dictation which defies resistance, the republic which in the guise of patriotism insists on a neighbour's submission to wrong, are often alike the causes of quarrel that withers the fruits of industry and destroys the spirit of enterprise. As the effects of these provocations are constantly multiplied by the augmented activity of human intercourse, it would be difficult to employ too much care in searching into their nature and providing timely means of controlling them. Much, no doubt, has been done from early times to check the evils of disturbance traceable to such sources, and much of a remedial kind is actually in force; but numerous events within the memory of living men may be cited to show that room enough remains for useful inquiry and practical improvement. I cannot presume to prosecute the one or to suggest the other in any degree adequate to the demands of so vast a



subject. Even my aim falls short of any such completeness. But having acquired, by no merit of my own, some little experience of the matters in question, I may perhaps be allowed to lay before the public such ill-digested notions as my course of life, whether active or otherwise, has brought within my range of thought.

Since international relations involve the best interests of mankind in the largest sense, it were well to consider without further delay in what those interests essentially consist. Let us take them one by one in the order of their importance.

It may well be thought that in a list constructed on that principle the first place belongs of right to morality. Does any one ask the meaning of that word when so applied? The answer is obvious : namely, that in the first dealings of one nation with another fairness should be the prevailing spirit on both sides, equally whether the parties differ from each other largely in power, wealth, and knowledge, or stand on much the same level in those important respects. Humanity comes next, but chiefly as a part of morality. The temptations to act with violence and cruelty are strong when commanders from civilised countries have to deal with the inhabitants of newly discovered regions ; and their excesses are not unfrequently provoked by the savages themselves, apt, as they are in general, to be treacherous, thievish, and irritable. But strength and knowledge on one side, weakness and ignorance on the other, show by their contrast which of the two parties is bound to set the good example. Let history speak in illustration of my meaning. Though separated in reality by a long lapse of years, Cook and Cortez may be brought within the compass of a single frame. Both were endowed with mental qualities that challenged inquiry and commanded admiration. The great English circumnavigator passed over the untrodden waters

like a divinity, and wherever he found the human form approached it with a friendly feeling and sympathetic consideration. The famous invader of Mexico saw in the half-tamed population of that country nothing but a swarm of inferior creatures to be subdued by fear and plundered without mercy.

Look here upon this picture, and on this.

Apart from consequences, has not England reason to be proud of her seafaring representative? Can Spain entertain the same sentiment in favour of her unscrupulous marauder? How is it now in the lands they respectively discovered? The descendants of those savages who ignorantly murdered Cook are now described as more inclined to intercourse with strangers, and give more signs of progressive civilisation, than any other originals of the Pacific islands. The Mexican population, on the contrary, though long intermingled with immigrants from Europe and their offspring, have relapsed into a state of very imperfect settlement, more remarkable for a wild spirit of independence and a normal aversion to strangers, than for a love of constitutional order and social improvement.

Among the best interests of mankind we can hardly be wrong in giving a high place to the acquisition of knowledge, or in calling to mind how much the communications of one country with another tend to promote the enjoyment of this universal benefit. It requires but little reflection to perceive how deeply the human mind is affected by climate and local position, and what varieties of thought and modes of investigation are suggested by the influence of surrounding objects. The shepherds of Chaldæa in their nightly watches were the earliest observers of the planetary movements and other marvels of the sky. The mountainous regions of Greece, Palestine, and Helvetia, fostered that love of inde-

pendence which distinguished their respective inhabitants. The development of art in its finest expressions may be traced to the inspiration of some genial climate, and to the perfections of form and colour derived from the same source. What would the world have been if the various races of mankind had been shut in by impassable barriers; and what do the least favoured parts of the earth not owe to that spirit of enterprise which has gradually brought the nations into more or less of fellowship, and given, one might almost say, by general interchange, the character of common stock, to the special advantages of each?

But those—even those of whom it may be said that

Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll—

can hardly fail to recognise in peace and commerce the foremost of those interests which stand in close connection with the subject of this essay. To name them is enough. The first is almost as much the life of international relations as the air we breathe is a necessary condition of human existence. The second may be fitly described as being at once the child and parent of the other. Illustrations would be thrown away upon a statement at once so obvious and so true.

Taking it then for granted that morality, knowledge, peace, and commerce are those interests which, in a social sense, ought to be constantly and practically kept in view when nations are dealing with each other, it is satisfactory in some degree to learn from history that together with the increase of population and intercourse there has been a gradual resort to measures which tend to strengthen and extend the relations attendant on that progress. The beginnings, indeed, of international intercourse have but too often borne a character of injustice and violence, ending

in the subjugation, if not the extinction, of one party by the other. Even to this hour a score of consecutive years free from disturbance or actual hostility is, we all know, of rare occurrence ; but such are the requirements of trade, such is the force of peaceful habits, that even in the heat of war the means of carrying it on are supplied by neutrals, and to run a blockade is rather esteemed as an act of courage than censured as a breach of law.

Mankind on the whole have shown in various ways from the earliest times, and by steps interruptedly progressive, the importance they attach to those great interests which are involved in the communications of one country with another, and the high degree in which they feel the duty of promoting them by all available means. They have not, perhaps, been equally careful to give a strictly moral character to their international relations ; but whatever may be defective in that respect is rather a consequence of inherent carelessness than of perverted principle.

We have now to enter upon another department of this extensive subject, one which may serve to throw light on the correctness of what I have asserted in the preceding paragraph. A mere list of words indicating the various ranks of persons employed for the maintenance or extension of international interests goes far to show how deeply those interests are valued throughout the civilised world. The names of ambassador, legate, nuncio, internuncio, envoy, minister, *chargé d'affaires*, consul, consul-general, vice-consul, to say nothing of political and consular agents, are familiar to all of us. Multiply these by the number of persons employed in various countries under the several denominations, or in aid of their object, and we find what might almost be termed an army of civilians devoted to the great service of which we are treating. Taking furthermore into account the expenses of such and so many establish-

ments, headed by individuals more or less qualified for the performance of important and at times entangled functions, we can hardly refuse our tribute of gratitude to those who have taken the lead in providing for the welfare of nations on one of its weakest sides. Whatever defects may still remain in the general machinery, it is highly encouraging to know that so much has already been done in the right direction, and it may well be hoped that in proportion as errors are perceived and new wants felt, the same spirit which has hitherto animated the directors of human intelligence will continue to operate with wholesome effect.

Whatever the original term may have been, the employment of embassies for international purposes would seem to date from a very remote period. Early instances of the practice are to be found in the Old Testament. Among the earliest, if not the very earliest, are those mentioned in the twentieth and twenty-first chapters of the book of Numbers. The fourteenth verse of the former is thus worded: "And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travel that hath befallen us." The request preceded by this preface was permission for the Israelites to pass through the Edomite country. The ambassadors are indeed styled messengers, but the circumstances, as stated in the Bible, were precisely those which according to modern definition characterise an embassy. The second instance recorded in the Pentateuch, is similar to the first in form, object, and result, differing from it only with respect to the sovereign for whose permission to traverse his country Moses applied. We are left to conjecture in what manner the ambassadors were personally treated, but silence warrants a supposition that they had nothing to complain of on that account, and that safety at least was their accustomed privilege. Nor is there reason to believe

that less security than now was afforded to individuals charged with a public commission from one sovereign to another, though of rank inferior to that of ambassadors, if such indeed were employed at any early period of historical times. The κήρυξ of the Homeric Greeks appears to have acted without risk of personal molestation when on duty, as well as the πρέσβυς, who possessed the ambassadorial character in a higher and more exclusive sense, and who, as we learn from Æschylus, was exempted by custom and public opinion, if not by law, from violence or insult.

It may be doubted whether ambassadors among the Greeks and Romans commanded the confidence of their countrymen to the same amount as they enjoyed in respect of foreigners. Embassies appear to have been formed of numerous members. Demosthenes, when he was sent to treat with Philip of Macedon, had several colleagues. Mention is made in history of embassies entertained in Athens at the public expense, as composed of members more or less numerous. Livy and Cicero use the plural number in making mention of legates, whether received or sent out by Rome. When the Jews sent an embassy to Augustus Cæsar, it was composed of at least more than one legate. Virgil describes Æneas as sending a hundred envoys (*centum oratores*) in one company to some neighbouring court of Italy. As each of them carried a branch of olive in his hand, their appearance in a body must have been that of a shrubbery, not much inferior to the moving wood in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. We must presume that the charge undertaken in common was explained by only one of the orators at a time. Had it been otherwise, the roar of Pope's hundred oxen might well have been preferred by the royal listener.

According to modern usage the lowest rank of diplomatic agency is as much protected as the first. Besides their

difference in point of dignity and display, an important privilege is still, as for some time back, attached to the title of ambassador, and attached to it exclusively: I mean the personal representation of his sovereign. An agent so qualified is understood in monarchical states to be on equal terms with the king or emperor to whom he is accredited, and therefore at liberty to appeal by word of mouth from the administration of a country to their master. An envoy is presented to the sovereign, but the transaction of diplomatic business lies between him and the minister alone. A *chargé d'affaires* has no recognised claim to approach the throne except by favour. These distinctions are at present kept practically in view less than formerly, and those who write in the public journals appear in general to ignore them altogether, but it remains to be shown that they have been at any time submitted by competent authority to a new form of regulation.

There is a tone of grandeur in its sound which makes the term "ambassador" a natural object of curiosity as to its origin and derivation. If the Spaniards had claimed it as of their invention, the likelihood would have been greatly on their side. Grandiloquence is one of their national attributes, and their substitution of an *x*, pronounced gutturally, for the double *s* in the French and English forms of the word, augments its effect on the ear. But this conjecture is not borne out by the opinion of inquirers. The languages of Greece and Rome have been rummaged in vain for some root from which the title may have sprung. The lexicographers have been reduced to the necessity of making guesses which do more honour to their ingenuity than to their judgment. But to pursue the inquiry further would be a mere waste of time. It is enough to know that we have the word, and are not ignorant of its meaning. The time and place of its adoption, and whether it preceded or

followed that of its correlative, "embassy," are questions which may be left without reproach to the hunters of literary butterflies. To trace the working of the system in which it culminates, to mark the advantages and defects of international practice, and to suggest available means of correction or improvement therein, are the pursuits which best deserve our attention, and hold out most remunerative rewards to well-conducted study. But the present occasion does not admit of more than some irregular notices of the matter comprised in this very expansive outline.

It is somewhat singular that so little, if anything, should be known of the time or place where diplomatic agents, whatever their rank or character, became resident. It is clear enough that by ancient practice an embassy ceased with the conclusion of the errand from which it derived its vitality. From a witty saying attributed to Sir Henry Wootton it may be inferred that the custom had begun in the reign of James the First. He said that ambassadors were respectable persons sent to *lie* abroad for the benefit of their country. This expression has a sound at least of residence. In the time of Queen Mary the appearances suggest that the Spanish ambassador resided permanently in England; but, supposing that to have been the case, it may have been an exceptional consequence of her Majesty's marriage with Philip. It is certain historically that Elizabeth in the course of her eventful reign received special embassies, that of Sully amongst the number; and it may be thought probable that her diplomatic communications with France and Scotland bore the same character, but it would seem that she had a resident ambassador at Madrid in the person of Chaloner. Be that as it may, whenever the credentials of an ambassador first bore a stamp of permanency, it was a step in the right direction, a sign of increased anxiety for the maintenance of friendly or profit-



able relations between one country and another—a proof, in fine, of progress in all the elements of civilisation.

A similar improvement has taken place in the most important respect of all. So general among nations has been the sense of supreme importance belonging to the security of ambassadors in the performance of their official duties, that even in Peru, when Pizarro brought it under the Spanish yoke, the principle was distinctly recognised. As a royal commission has not the effect of subduing human frailties, ambassadors have sometimes, though rarely, been convicted of intrigues, nay, even of crimes against the State in which they exercised their respective functions. But the instances in which they have been punished under the local law, or by the will of the injured sovereign, are rarer still. The guilty representative has, with few exceptions, been sent away, or at most sent back to his own master with an explanatory complaint, or an appeal to the employer's sense of justice and power of correction. As far back as the palmy days of Rome there is evidence that the principle which underlay such conduct prevailed in the minds of its noblest citizens. One of the Scipios when in power is credited with a sentiment which redounds greatly to his honour. A Roman embassy having been ill-treated by the Carthaginians, he was asked what he meant to do in the way of revenge: "Certainly not what the Carthaginians have done," is the reply ascribed to him. In modern times, on the occasion of war breaking out, the idea of treating an ambassador as a hostage is not without example. In Turkey at least a case of that kind has occurred within a century from the present time. It took place in the person of M. Bulgakoff, the Russian representative at Constantinople. It was his fortune to undergo a term of confinement in the seven towers, which, though now untenanted, served in his day for a state prison. The battle of Navarino, which took

place just fifty years ago, might easily have given him a leash of successors at once. An almost total destruction of the Turkish naval power was the result of that conflict. The combined squadrons of England, France, and Russia formed the victorious force. Those countries were formally at peace with the Porte; their representatives were at the Sultan's court. Well might the Sultan's suspicions of treachery be roused to a state of fury, and indeed there is reason to believe that Sultan Mahmoud's first intention was to make the respective ambassadors responsible for what he naturally saw in the light of an unwarrantable outrage. A message was conveyed officially from the Porte to the three embassies that in the Porte's opinion the law of nations had been violated. Yet prudence prevailed under the influence of some wise counsellors, and the ambassadors were allowed to retire without other hindrance than the refusal of passports. What a triumph was this for the cause of international respect! How greatly did it tell in favour of the world's capacity for moral improvement in matters of political conduct!

The consular department stands next for consideration in continuing the present subject of inquiry. Lower in dignity, as belonging rather to individual interests than to those of the state in general, it has risen with the growth of trade to a level of practical importance with the diplomatic order. Residing in a foreign country, consuls enjoy a certain amount of special respect from its authorities in virtue of their appointment by an independent sovereign Power. But they are amenable to local jurisdiction unless when exempted from its action by the provisions of a treaty. In Turkey, by treaties of old date, styled capitulations, the foreign consuls are not only independent of the national law, but are themselves entitled to settle differences between their own countrymen, and even, in cases of dispute between

the latter and the dependents of other consulates, to exercise a joint authority for judgment as well as trial. From this example of liberality it may be inferred not only that the encouragement of commerce was a part of the Sultan's policy, but that the office of consul stood well in the estimation of public men and their respective governments. At what period a resort to consular establishments became necessary may be left without inconvenience to conjecture ; but it will interest the curious to know that the first appointment of the kind bearing its present name took place in Italy under the questionable auspices of our Richard the Third. Surely it was a grand title wherewith to invest a mercantile officer. It would seem, however, that the Italians acquiesced in its adoption, if they did not suggest it, and therefore we are in a manner bound to accept it as an appropriate appellation, though the lictor with his axe and bundle of sticks no longer bears it company.

Convenience, to which the gradations of diplomacy are probably to be ascribed, was no doubt the parent of similar degrees in the consular line. The functions of a consul-general are deemed co-extensive with the country to which he is sent. A consul's are confined in principle to a district. A vice-consul is either the consul's aid, or an agent empowered to act as a full consul, with smaller appointments and in some district or seaport of minor importance. In countries where the foreign trade is on a large scale, the consular service naturally tends to grow up into the same proportions. Individual traders of the same country as the consul look naturally to him for advice, assistance, and such protection as the limited extent of his privileges, or his communication with the authorities on whom he depends, may afford. But the range of consular duty is wider than this. He is expected to keep a watchful eye over all that passes within his district of a nature to interest his own govern-

ment and country. With this view the consul is generally instructed to maintain a double correspondence, namely, with the ministerial office at home, and also with the diplomatic chief whose orders he is bound to respect. He has, moreover, in our service, to draw up at fixed periods a statistical report on the state of trade where he is. He fills no little space in the neighbourhood of his residence. It depends upon himself to be an object of high respect among those who form the social circle around him. Though by no means a star of the first magnitude, he appears to them of greater dimensions than a superior luminary in the distant capital. He and his colleagues act as spectacles to the ambassador, and, in states where the Foreign Office stands in awe of a Parliament, they go far to illuminate a whole series of blue books, and thereby show the importance progressively attached to international intercourse and the promotion of its interests. It is no wonder that the post of consul should be much prized by the mercantile class. In places where we have no regular trade or other interest to serve, but in which nevertheless a British subject, or even a British vessel, may now and then by accident require assistance, there is no difficulty in finding a respectable native merchant ready to accept the appointment of consul, with no other remuneration than the honour of hoisting our union-jack over his door. The arrangement may have its disadvantages, though it must be allowed to supply an occasional want on the principle of strict economy.

In a country like ours, the whole consular establishment must require an expense of no inconsiderable amount. The interests which profit by it are too important to be left without such means of support and encouragement as the State can reasonably supply. Liberal and frugal tendencies are therefore brought into mild conflict with each other,

and the spirit of party which presides in our parliamentary constitution occasions no small fluctuation in those discordant principles. In illustration of this remark I may be allowed to mention what Lord Castlereagh, when Foreign Minister, once said to me on my return from abroad: "You left us squandering pounds, and you find us squabbling for sixpences." The recollection of this passage in my intercourse with an illustrious but unfortunate statesman carries me back to another circumstance of the past connected with my present theme. It fell to my lot, when charged with our mission to the United States, to draw up a scale of salaries appropriate to our numerous consulships in that part of the New World. I recommended for each a yearly allowance proportioned to the work to be done, and sufficient to enable the consul to live on terms of social equality with the respectable classes of his district. He was not expected to entertain *ex officio*, but it seemed desirable that his mode of living should be that of a gentleman possessing a moderate income. How, as a rule, could he otherwise have the degree of influence required for the wholesome discharge of his duties? How, for instance with a family, could he be free from those anxieties and temptations which depress the mind, and sometimes add discredit to a failure of energy? With respect to fees, which consuls are authorised to receive from their clients on account of certain chancery acts prescribed by law, the annual amount of them is subject to so much variation that it may well be thought best to form them into a fund at the disposal of the Government. In such case they would be equally available for the payment of salaries, but with the advantage of not giving a character of uncertainty to the consular stipend. Fixity of income goes far to insure the regulation of expense and keeping out of debt, that frequent source of embarrassment and humiliation. If the remembrance of so remote a transaction may

be relied on, my plan was approved at the Foreign Office and carried more or less into effect, until another party came into power with retrenchment figuring in its programme. The word went forth, and a change more or less slashing was brought to bear on our table of American salaries, with no other view but the single one of reduction. This, if correctly stated, lies open to a strong feeling of regret. The machinery for protecting and promoting such interests as those which underlie the term *international relations* has a just claim to efficiency as the principle of its financial maintenance. Cheapness, as the exclusive aim of settlement in such cases, may prove in the end to be extravagance. Economy may be consulted with more advantage in a judicious selection of places where consular authority is most needed, and where a greater or lower degree of rank and appointment is the most suitable.

In recent years the increase of attention paid to the qualification of candidates for official employment may be fairly taken as an earnest of good results. Competition with its attendant examinations is calculated, no doubt, to provide the State with servants well grounded in the rudiments of such knowledge as office of any kind generally requires. It helps to bring into use the mechanical talents from a wider range of capacities. It tends to deprive ignorance, sloth, and dulness of the preferment they were wont at times to obtain in the reign of patronage. But it can hardly pretend to develop or even to ascertain the higher qualities of mind, the judgment, the foresight, the resolution, the morality, which are the true elements of usefulness and honourable success in public life. "Cramming" and "coaching," to use the slang of the day, will often serve to obtain a preference for some youth whose only superiority over his rivals lies in a quick memory. An illustrious dignitary of our Church, who had gained the university

scholarship at Cambridge, told me that he had answered correctly a score of the two dozen questions put to him during his examination, and that a few months later he could not have answered four of them. In the first competition paper I ever saw, one of the questions which had been employed to test the comparative merit of the candidates was the name of a stream in Dorsetshire.

It is refreshing to learn from the public journals that the improvement of our consular service engages the serious attention of Her Majesty's Minister for Foreign Affairs. It appears that a measure having this object in view has actually passed through its first stage of operation. The countries to which it applies are Turkey, Persia, and Egypt, where under present circumstances it is most wanted. The formation of a body of "student dragomans," eligible for eventual employment as consuls or interpreters, can hardly fail to be useful in a high degree. Whatever may be his rank, a consul who is ignorant of the national language where he resides, especially if it be at a seaport, acts under needless difficulties. He must employ an interpreter, and, if his own salary be small, pay him at a rate which is fitter to cause discontent and embarrassment than to obtain good work or to exclude temptation. The principle of opening two doors of preferment to those who stand in the first instance at one, might perhaps be carried further with advantage to the public. It might even be introduced with a prospect of good results into the home as well as into the foreign service. Together with the growth of population, wealth, knowledge, and activity throughout Europe, to say nothing of America, the business of every official department increases from year to year, and in England more particularly the frequent changes of ministry tend to make the chief of each department more and more dependent for information, and consequently even in some degree for

opinion, on his subordinate officers. It is, therefore, evidently desirable that the clerks in each of the leading establishments should be something more than the title in modern acceptation implies, that their minds should not be tethered down in one narrow circle, but acquire first elements of judgment and a freer spirit by more extended practice in the official region. Grooves of thought, confining the movements of intellect to some inexpansive line, are to be found in more than one of the learned professions, and rare even is the lawyer who can discuss the merits of a political measure with the large comprehension of a statesman. Let the clerks of each first-rate department be interchangeable at convenient times, and even attached now and then for a while to some diplomatic mission or consulship abroad, and it would be strange if the traveller, enlightened by variety of scene and occupation, did not finally prove a safer counsellor to his chief than if he had stagnated during his best years in one same pool of almost mechanical routine. It should not be forgotten that the functions of a consul in the East are judicial as well as commercial, and that a moderate amount of legal knowledge is not only a creditable accomplishment, but an acquisition not to be omitted without serious prejudice to the interests concerned. This is the more important at the Turkish capital, because the ambassador's court, as originally instituted—a court of last appeal—has been transferred to the Consul-General, who has, moreover, the privilege in certain cases of a seat at the chief native tribunal, where Turkish law and the Turkish language are naturally in use.

When, as in some rare cases, in Egypt and at Hamburg for instance, a diplomatic character is attached to the consulship, the rule of international law affords a more complete security to the individual who holds the double office. If



cases of this kind were more frequent, the trading classes might have reason to rejoice ; but it is by no means unlikely that the inconvenience to any independent state of having a nursery of foreign arrogance, far away from metropolitan control, in every provincial town and seaport, has had the effect of limiting the admission of such rights as the full extent of international privilege confers.

Permission to trade, which has not yet been entirely exploded from the consular service, may derive credit from its economical tendency, but can hardly be thought to merit approval on any other ground, whether moral, political, or commercial. The trading consul, careful as he may be to avoid reproach, is by the mere fact exposed to much that necessarily detracts from the respect due to his official character and reliance on the impartiality of his decisions. He may be called upon to give judgment in his own cause ; he may have to contend with the local authorities on his private account ; he is lucky indeed if he escapes being an object of jealousy or suspicion to rival traders. It is needless to remark that of all men a magistrate, in which capacity consuls are generally entitled to act, at least under the name of arbiters, ought to be free from the bias of private interests, and above any kind of disparaging suspicion.

Among the papers belonging to the period of my official life I have recently found one which, more than thirty years old, contains opinions so much in accordance with those I still entertain, that I may strengthen my present statement by inserting a few of its passages here. It is in the form of a simple memorandum, and as its immediate bearing was on Turkey I probably drew it up for transmission to Downing Street :

Much might be effected by opening the several departments of the establishment to each other. Surely the public service would gain if attachés were placed within reach of practical consular knowledge, if consuls were

less rooted to one spot or one circle, if linguists were called into a wider sphere of action, if Englishmen had less to apprehend from being classed with native agents, and the native more to hope from their connection with the service—in short, if more activity, variety, and promotion, founded on solid acquirements, were opened to all.

Our general system holds out few prizes to them, and if they are well paid, they are undistinguished and tethered into caste.

A consul is now considered as placed for life, except in cases of gross misconduct. . . . A system founded on the principles of transfer, promotion, and uncertain tenure might go far in the way of remedy, and, as consuls now retire on pensions, there would be no hardship.

The rank of consul-general would perhaps be more useful as a prize for the meritorious than in any other point of view.

A succession of students should be provided.

We are told by writers on the law of nations that every nation has a right to trade with those who are ready to agree with it in the practice, and therefore that to molest its traffic is an injury. Whatever modifications of this right the counter-claim of belligerents may have introduced, the consuls or protectors of trade are entitled to every consideration and encouragement consistent with the good order and independence of the country where they reside. The example of a State whose subjects carry on an almost unlimited commerce, and whose outlying dominions are of unparalleled extent, must tell more or less on the policy of other States; and England is therefore bound not only to give full protection to her own commercial interests, but also in so doing to act by methods sound in principle and acceptable to the world at large. Her standard, which floats respected in every clime, declares her sense of the obligation by virtually bearing on its folds a watchword for all who would strike off from commerce the shackles of selfish error, and secure in time by general concurrence the unrestrained diffusion of nature's ever-multiplying productions, and of art's still increasing contributions to the comfort of mankind.

Thus it is that we move as a nation on the line marked out by Providence, and happy is our lot in other matters

also when we take for our guide the rule of action which an earnest search into the laws of Almighty Wisdom can hardly fail to suggest. Oceans have been justly styled the bridges of human intercourse. The fact implies the intention, and therefore we act in obedience to the Creator when, by means of statute, treaty, or subordinate agency, we promote the interchange of produce, and encourage by protecting the salutary process. Attention to the qualification of persons employed in carrying these processes into effect is evidently no small part of our duty. With respect to consuls little remains to be said on this point, and what might be added belongs, with slight shades of difference, if any at all, to the more privileged class of diplomacy. An ambassador, as the personal representative of his sovereign, ought, in the abstract at least, to possess that degree of superiority which ability, education, manners, and character, united to good purpose, naturally confer. He should live on terms of equality with the first of the land, and, in serving the interests of his country with vigilance and firmness, remember that his mission has its roots in peace, though its branches may be shaken and its leaves scattered for a season. Such is the spirit in which he should inform his government and execute its instructions, never shrinking from responsibility when the urgency of circumstances appears to call for an independent decision. More on this part of the subject would be superfluous. Similar requirements, differing it may be in degree, befit all the members of diplomacy when acting in chief. No one need be told that the service is one of honour proportioned to its importance. To make it a profession confined to those who plod through its earlier stages would be favourable to a few deserving individuals; but critical emergencies may require an exceptional choice, and recourse might be had to the Houses of Parliament with every chance of success. The

education of that contentious and untrammelled arena is calculated to invigorate, enlarge, and elevate the mind, nor is it likely that faculties of keen intelligence so exercised would disappoint the public when called to the management of some weighty negotiation. A prominent example of this kind has recently occurred, and the appointment was approved from first to last, notwithstanding its unusual character and unsuccessful issue.\* Perfection is not for this world. The ideal has no material reality. Every medal has its reverse. Even day itself is composed of light and darkness. Commerce, that source of blessings to our race, the bond of nations, and first-born of peace, may be charged with the contradiction of supplying those who are at war with the means of mutual destruction.

It is nevertheless consoling to observe the improvement which from time to time has taken place in the general view of what constitutes the true principle of commercial agreements. There was a day when a treaty regulating the traffic between two countries conferred no credit on the negotiator unless it gave some decided advantage to his side of the bargain. A better principle now prevails in such matters, and the treaty which gives no advantage to either party, but provides equally for the interests of both, is held to be the soundest. The settlement of disputes by arbitration has not yet superseded the rougher method of appealing to the sword, but a few successive instances of it which do honour to the present century, and the tendencies of public opinion, encourage the hope of its becoming ere long a fixed rule of international law. The annual conferences, such as took place quite recently at Geneva, are no light signs of a movement in the right direction, and may with reason perhaps be hailed as harbingers of a pacific era.

\* Mission of the Marquis of Salisbury to Constantinople, December, 1876.

Present appearances in the political, religious, and commercial departments of our civilised world hang with the gloom of heavy clouds over the dawn of that prospect; but as hope lay under a load of evil in Pandora's box, and as, from our experience of nature's operations, we perceive that extremes are apt to produce their contraries, we may be allowed to hold good against the suggestions of utter discouragement. The reader need not be reminded of the destructive wars which, on a colossal scale and with frequent recurrence, have marked the last thirty years; what mighty changes in the relative condition of states have in consequence taken place, side by side with a series of scientific triumphs for the most part auxiliary to the arts of peace and the brotherhood of human societies. Still less need he be told that the spirit of violence and unscrupulous enmity is now culminating in horrors which render every field of battle the slaughterhouse of an heroic soldiery with no result but that of preparation for other scenes of carnage more hideous still. Exhaustive sacrifices declare the patriotism and religious zeal of either belligerent. There is no visible relaxation of hostility in Turkey or in Russia. The charities of Christendom bend over the sufferers with impartial benevolence. Surgeons and nurses of repute encounter in numbers privation and danger at the call of humanity. Reporters of every description throng the fields of conflict. Voices of sorrow and indignation resound from every quarter. The neutral Governments alone, as it would seem, are mute and motionless. Neither the waste of life in regular armies, nor wanton cruelties of the undisciplined, have called forth any authoritative expression of censure on such astounding excesses. Still less are they known to have made any overture leading to the acceptance of their mediation by the belligerent Powers. Their reticence at such a crisis may be regretted the more as European

interests are concerned in no small degree. Russian ambition and Turkish vengeance are alike to be apprehended, and consequently to be kept in check. Whatever may be thought of their respective lines of conduct, the tributary frontier provinces have claims on the sympathy of all who believe as Christians, and reprobate as men political oppression. Their position, if Russia should prove too weak to stipulate on their behalf, would probably be grievous in the extreme. Should victory declare itself finally in favour of Russia, the sovereign of that country may find himself compelled by the clamour of his subjects to demand concessions injurious to the interests of Europe, and emphatically to those of England. To obtain the concurrence of several independent Powers in the course of action suggested by these remarks would, no doubt, be a task of considerable difficulty. But to overcome the worst difficulties for a great and beneficent purpose is true glory, and well might Englishmen be proud of their government if the attempt were made in good faith and by suitable means, though without any adequate success.

## XIV.

# RECOLLECTIONS OF THE REVIVAL OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE.

[PART I., AUGUST, 1878.]

SOME papers recently laid on the table of the House of Commons relate to transactions concerning Greece of a somewhat distant date, but closely connected with the interests of that country in its present and prospective state.

It so happened that I was called upon to take an active part in the negotiations which led to the revival of Hellenic independence, nor have I ever ceased to give my earnest attention to the conduct of the Government established at Athens, and the condition of the people submitted constitutionally to its rule. These circumstances concur to flatter me with the hope of rendering some little service to the cause of inquiry by putting into a convenient shape such recollections as I retain of the occurrences in question. In aid of a memory subject to the usual infirmities, I shall have recourse to the surer testimony of correspondence, quotations from which will occasionally find a place in the following pages.

It was not till after my return from America in the autumn of 1823 that I had anything to do with the affairs of Greece. Even then I had first to go through a series of conferences, having for their object the friendly settlement

of all our outstanding differences with the United States. This interesting but fruitless negotiation occupied several months of the following year, and its failure, though much to be regretted, had the consolation of not being attributable to the British Government or its representatives.

The appointment in view was an embassy at the Sultan's court, and consequently an immediate connection with the conflict still raging between the Porte and its Hellenic subjects. Hence it was that I had to visit St. Petersburg before I went to my further destination at Stamboul. The basis of a mediation between the contending parties, to one at least of whom a friendly proposal of that kind was thought likely to prove agreeable, had to be laid down at the former capital, and happy should I have been to share in the accomplishment of so laudable a plan. Mr. Canning was at that time Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and he directed me to draw up a statement of the various points which would probably have to be considered in discussing the range and character of the intended offer. The memorandum, which I wrote in consequence, is too long for insertion here, but parts of it, and those the very first, may be introduced with some degree of advantage. They follow word for word :—

It is presumed that the British Government would hail the complete independence of Greece, if effected by the Greeks themselves, as the best solution of the difficulties connected with the present conflict between that country and the Porte ; but sentiments of humanity, and the natural sympathy between a people in the possession of liberty and a people struggling to obtain it, must not be allowed to operate to the exclusion of all other considerations. Some views of British policy may perhaps combine with the best feelings of human nature to induce Great Britain to stand forward without reserve in support of the independence of Greece, but there is no denying that to place herself in such an attitude she must act in contradiction to that pacific and comprehensive system of policy which she has adopted for the most beneficial purposes, at the risk of being involved in war without the support of her principal allies, and on very questionable grounds of justice.



The opinions of the leading powers of Europe have been given in favour of an arrangement which, though it holds out important advantages to Greece, would nevertheless have the effect of replacing that country under the sovereignty of the Porte. It is not to be expected that the Sultan would give up so large a portion of his empire without an appeal to arms, especially at the requisition of a single power. The right of Great Britain to make such a requisition under the present circumstances would find but little countenance either in the principles of the law of nations, or in any specific obligations contracted by Turkey.

It is therefore evident that in the conferences at Petersburg there can be no question of the complete independence of Greece, but only of its pacification on terms consistent on one side with the sovereignty of the Porte, and calculated on the other to secure the Greeks in essential points from the violence and misgovernment of their former possessors. If the Sultan cannot be required to relinquish the entire sovereignty of Greece, neither can the Greeks be required to return to their former position under his sway.

Considering the dreadful extremities to which the war in Greece has been carried, and the very great uncertainty of its final issue, the Allied Powers cannot fail to serve both the contending parties by engaging them to sacrifice a part of their respective pretensions for the restoration of peace. But if the same motives which preclude Great Britain and the Allies from insisting on the independence of Greece restrain them also from going to war in support of the plan which they are preparing to urge on the acceptance of the Porte, it is but fair that they should abstain from employing any degree of coercion to bring the Greeks into their measures.

The Greeks may act unwisely in preferring a precarious independence accompanied with war in its worst shape, to any arrangement which the Allied Powers are likely to effect in their behalf, but it would surely be the height of injustice and cruelty to deny them the right of judging for themselves in a case of such vital importance. It thus appears that in attempting the pacification of Greece the Allies are bound to stop short of war.

But it would be a fatal mistake to suppose, while determining not to go the length of hostilities, that any plan of pacification at all acceptable to the Greeks can be pressed with success upon the Porte by other means than those of a virtual compulsion.

The Turks, in shutting their eyes to the most obvious considerations of policy and humanity, might plead the example of nations far superior to them in the arts of government, and enjoying the advantages of a purer religion. But to induce the Porte to recede in any degree from the contest in which she is now engaged, an apprehension of something worse than the continuance of that contest, however sanguinary and impolitic, of some evil more to be dreaded than an insurrection of the

Janissaries, must be presented to her imagination. War, though not actually menaced, with some of the principal powers of Europe, or, at least, with one of them, must be made to appear the probable consequence of protracted hostilities between the Porte and her Greek subjects. The Turkish ministry must be led to view the danger as a natural result of that state of things, to which their acceptance of the proposed plan of pacification could alone put an end.

The memorandum continues in a similar strain:—

In order not to alarm the pride of the Turkish Government at the same time that their fears are excited, a tone of conciliation and friendly interest must be adopted at least in making the first communication. Particular attention should be paid to this point, equally whether the charge of opening and conducting the negotiation be entrusted to the Russian minister alone, or to the representatives of all the Allied Powers at Constantinople.

The adoption of the one or of the other of these two modes of proceeding will probably depend on the principle on which the Allied Powers may see fit to ground their intervention. If Russia be put forward to interfere on behalf of the Greeks in virtue of her specific stipulations with the Porte, the Russian ambassador will naturally become the organ of her proposals and remonstrances. The ambassadors of the four other principal powers can hardly in that case take any other than an auxiliary and occasional part in the negotiations with the Porte. If the suggestion of Austria, on the other hand, be adopted, and the offer of mediating between the Porte and her insurgent subjects be made in the name of all the Allied Powers on the general ground of the great European interests, the ambassadors of those powers will probably be called upon to act collectively.

Of these two distinct modes of proceeding neither is free from inconvenience. The one has the disadvantage of bringing Russia again into collision with the Porte; and the other may be thought to carry with it the risk of committing England to all the principles of the Holy Alliance.

Considering the alternative with reference to the Turks alone, the most effectual course would perhaps be found to embrace both the above-mentioned principles.

The ambassadors of the five Allied Powers ought to be instructed to communicate to the Porte in similar terms, though separately, the common views of their respective sovereigns with regard to the pacification of Greece, at the same time that the Russian ambassador might interfere in the same sense in virtue of treaty stipulations subsisting between his Court and the Turkish Government. A joint representation, grounded on general principles and expressed in a more authoritative

tone, might be held in reserve, in case the Porte should obstinately persist in rejecting the proposal of the Allies; and it is worth considering whether the important measure of breaking off all friendly relations with the Turkish part of the Porte's dominions might not, if necessary, be finally resorted to.

Such a measure would doubtless be attended with considerable inconvenience to trade, but besides that it would lead the Turks to apprehend war with the principal powers of Europe as its probable though not immediate consequence, their supplies of grain for the consumption of Constantinople would be rendered very precarious by it, and their finances would be materially affected.

It may be objected to this expedient that the Allies, if prepared to resort to it against the Porte, ought equally to employ it, if necessary, for the purpose of influencing the Greeks. But the objection is not well founded.

The Allied Powers have diplomatic relations with the former and none with the latter. Those relations they have a perfect right to suspend on grounds far short of what would justify an appeal to arms; and the interruption of commerce must follow on a withdrawal of that protection without which the Christian merchant could not safely pursue his business in Turkey.

The Turks, to say nothing of their religion, are known to differ, *toto cœlo*, from the nations of European origin in custom, language, and laws. They are themselves so sensible, and indeed so proud, of this difference, that they recognise no general law of nations, and in their discussions with other countries rest their claims exclusively on treaty.

If the Greeks were to persist in rejecting the overtures of the Allies after the Porte had acceded to them, they could be made to know that they had nothing more favourable to expect from European mediation, and that they would thenceforth be left without further countenance from any Christian power than what would result from a fair application of the rules of neutrality.

The memorandum concludes with the following addition:—

It will not be easy, however desirable, to come to an early decision as to the number of islands and extent of country to be comprised within the limits of Greece. It is important that the Greeks of the continent should have, if possible, a good natural boundary to separate them from their Turkish neighbours. In general, military possession or a very decided superiority in population is what may be expected to offer a principle for regulating the extent of their territory.

The instructions intended for me were already in part on paper when one of the public journals announced as an

authentic fact that both belligerents were committed to a refusal of any mediation which might be offered. The knowledge of this both-sided resolution put necessarily a stop to further progress in diplomatic equipment. The Russians took offence at this interruption, and seemed to fancy that some political design lay in ambush under its skirts. After a delay of no unreasonable length the mission to Petersburg was again taken up with that degree of change in form and purpose which circumstances required. I was to go by Vienna, to communicate with the Emperor and his chief Minister there, and to have powers for settling by convention the boundary between our territories and those of Russia in North America. As to mediation, the task was limited, or nearly so, to an interchange of explanations regarding the proposed conference, its suspension by England for the present, and the views entertained respectively in prospect of its eventual resumption. The principal instruction composed for my guidance was not only ample in itself, but an accompaniment of fifty enclosures left nothing to be desired on the score of information. It contained the following passage:—"You will take advantage of your residence there (at St. Petersburg) to enter into explanation with the Russian Ministry upon the whole question of Greece; and as well to learn their ulterior views, as to state explicitly the opinion of your Government upon it." A subsequent paragraph served to show how utterly useless would have been an attempt at mediation following close upon the occurrence referred to above, and also to explain more fully the form and character of the occurrence itself. To these specific explanations succeeded a statement of the general principles on which the British policy was grounded at the time; and so much historical interest adheres to them that I am induced to repeat the very words in which they are expressed:—

To preserve the peace of the world is the leading object of the policy of England. For this purpose, it is necessary in the first place to prevent to the utmost of our power the breaking out of new quarrels ; in the second 'place, to compose, where it can be done by friendly mediation, existing differences, and, thirdly, where that is hopeless, to narrow as much as possible their range ; and, fourthly, to maintain for ourselves an imperturbable neutrality in all cases where nothing occurs to affect injuriously our interests or our honour.

It became my business to inculcate the application of these principles to the impending question of mediation whether at Vienna or at Petersburg. On visiting the capital of Austria I lost no time in waiting on Prince Metternich, and requesting an audience of the Emperor. From our resident ambassador there, Sir Henry Wellesley, I met with all suitable and friendly support ; from the Sovereign and his Chancellor a reception of which I had no reason to complain. My discussions with the Prince were frank and full. His Imperial master listened graciously, and stated his opinions without any apparent reserve. Nevertheless the same language in substance proceeded from both. They would not admit the uselessness of opening a conference for immediate mediation ; they professed to hold cheap the Greek declaration which had operated so powerfully on the British Cabinet ; they would be no party to what they deemed an encouragement on our part to revolution, and they were not disposed to adopt our doctrine of excluding by previous engagement the eventual use of force from the means of obtaining compliance. Prince Metternich referred me at one time to M. Gentz, a well-known political writer, who was then employed privately by him in drawing up parts of the State correspondence. Discussion with so able a man was interesting enough, but the questions in hand derived no advantage, in a British sense, from his capacious mind. It was evident that Austria meant to side with Russia, not perhaps so much from sympathy as from un-

willingness to loosen her friendly connection with that power, which in Prince Metternich's time was ever an object of dislike to the Germans, and of apprehension to their central authority.

Christmas still found me at Vienna. The long wintry region to be traversed on the way to St. Petersburg, as yet unrailed, had one advantage—namely, that of delay. Time was wanted to smooth down the ruffled tempers of Count Nesselrode and his autocratic master. A serious overflow of the Neva had recently occurred, and, instead of operating like the waters of Lethe, it had increased the vexation caused by what they deemed to be English trickery. A tardy arrival on the scene of negotiation was more likely to do good than harm, and the notion was subsequently justified by a courteous reception. At a customary state ball in his Winter Palace the Emperor was pleased to single me out for a long conversation which had the effect of accrediting me to the highest society as much as the royal letter had accredited me to himself. When business began, I had to deal with Count Nesselrode, assisted by M. Politka, who had been one of my diplomatic colleagues at Washington. The course to be pursued required a certain degree of management. The Russians, although they were out of humour, had no wish to break with us. It seemed therefore best to give precedence to the North American boundary question, and to keep in reserve the less palatable subject of Turkey and Greece. A brief succession of conferences sufficed to produce a conventional regulation of the boundary line, which was subsequently ratified by the respective Governments.

A rougher road then opened before us. Count Nesselrode betrayed some little impatience at my continued silence about the mediation. The French and Austrian representatives, MM. de la Ferronaye and Lebzeltern, had

their share of this feeling. To say the truth, it was time for the delay to cease. It could no longer be concealed that my instructions were limited to explanation on our side and a mutual interchange of views as to any eventual co-operation for restoring peace in the Levant. France and the two Emperors wished to have England a party to their conference, but to all appearance were ready to come to an agreement without her. A preliminary conversation with Count Nesselrode was soon brought to a stop by his unwillingness to go on when he learned to what limits I was restricted. We agreed, however, to take the Emperor's pleasure, and the consequence was a renewal of our talk. But the second endeavour proved as useless as the first. I could take no part in a conference, and our Russian ally would not give up a resort to coercion as a final means of obtaining assent to an offer of mediation. The audience—the audience of leave—ensued, and the Emperor detained me nearly three-quarters of an hour, anxious, as it seemed, to explain the principles on which his general policy was founded, and their application to the affairs of Turkey and Greece in particular. My report of what passed on the occasion contained all the principal points of his Majesty's discourse, and after a lapse of more than fifty years I may venture to repeat by quotation some parts of it not wholly destitute of historical interest.

The Emperor declared that throughout his late difference with the Porte he had laboured conscientiously to avoid the necessity of an appeal to arms. He assured me that in proceeding to take measures for restoring tranquillity in the East his only motives were those of humanity towards the Greeks, of concern for the general welfare of Europe, and anxiety to remove as far as possible all subjects of irritation between himself and the Sultan. "I am well aware," said his Imperial Majesty, "that the resources of Russia, great as they are, could scarcely be called into action without exciting, perhaps not unreasonably, the vigilance and solicitude of other sovereigns, and it is on this very account that I have made it a solemn duty since the evacuation of France by the Allied

Forces to keep my empire in an attitude of perfect repose." . . . His Imperial Majesty was so explicit in his assertions that the intervention which he contemplated was of a strictly pacific character, that I ventured to avow my embarrassment in endeavouring to reconcile those assertions with the evident unwillingness which existed to satisfy the scruples of Great Britain by a positive and binding assurance to the same effect. The Emperor condescended to reply that we had only to go into the conferences in order to be completely satisfied, but I listened in vain for an explanation of the causes which deterred the Russian Cabinet, anxious as it is for the co-operation of Great Britain, from promising to satisfy the British ministers in the only manner which they are disposed to appreciate. . . . Speaking of the war in Greece, the Emperor betrayed a mind divided between sympathy with a people of his own persuasion goaded into rebellion by their sufferings, and disapprobation of the revolutionary principles which had been mixed up with the causes of their struggle.

These extracts carry me back to Vienna and my audience of the Emperor Francis, whose language on the subject of mediation was in substance the same as that of his imperial brother, but with a difference in something more than manner and expression. He told me, *frankly*, as he said, that "if England chose to take her own line in the affair, he was also prepared to follow his own. He should place himself at the side of the Emperor of Russia, who had need of countenance and support against his own nation—a nation ambitious as in the days of the Empress Catherine and still cherishing hopes of conquest on the side of Turkey. . . . He was prepared to go into the Conference without England—not that by so doing he saw any prospect of effecting the pacification of Greece . . . but to tie up Russia from taking any active part in the war between the Turks and the Greeks. . . . The best, he thought, that could happen would be that the Sultan should succeed in putting down the insurrection, and *then* that of his own accord he should improve the condition of his Christian subjects. He had no feeling for rebels. They were to be reduced to submission," &c.



The two Emperors and their respective ministers being so unmistakably of the same mind, my only remaining duty was to return to London. I left St. Petersburg with the persuasion that no conference in which Austrian counsels prevailed would have any satisfactory, or indeed any efficient issue at all, and such in fact turned out to be the sequence of my mission, which could pretend to no greater merit than that of protecting the Greeks from an ominous act of interference with their struggles for liberty. The homeward journey had no political interest, but it gave me an opportunity of passing through Moscow and Berlin, to say nothing of Warsaw, which I had visited on my way out. Although in the latter city I found the Emperor Alexander and his Minister for Foreign Affairs, I had no further communication with them on the subject of Greece.

After a gracious reception by the King and a few months of quiet in England, I started with fresh instructions for Constantinople, and found myself again mixed up with the Levantine affairs. During the interval a deputation from the heads of the Greek insurrection appeared in London, and its members were admitted to a conference with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The chief object of the mission was to obtain the consent of England to become the protectress of Greece. Mr. Canning's reply was recorded in a *précis* of the conference, from which I extract the following passage, showing in addition the determination at that time of the Hellenic leaders:—

“There might be a point in the contest,” said Mr. Canning, “in which Great Britain might exert her influence to promote a compromise between the Greeks and the Porte, not for the entire independence of Greece, for that would be asking *everything*, and could not be the subject of a compromise (if they could conquer it, it was well, and that was their affair), but for anything short of independence which might form the basis of an arrangement with the Porte. The Greek deputies declared such a plan to be impossible. The Greeks would never again

live in amity with the Turks established among them. They must either conquer or die."

In a despatch from the Secretary of State to the King's Ambassador at Vienna, dated October 3, 1825, the following instruction occurs :—

Your Excellency will not fail to point out to Prince Metternich that the language of his Majesty's proclamation sufficiently implies the resolution of his Majesty not to contract with the Greeks any other relations than those of the neutrality which his Majesty has hitherto scrupulously observed.

My journey to Constantinople commenced about the middle of October. From the French coast to Naples it was by land. At Naples I embarked on board the "Revenge," Admiral Sir Harry Neale's flagship. On the way thither, in passing by Geneva, I fell in with Prince Adam Czartoryski and Count Capo d'Istria, both in honourable exile, alike in their attachment to countries labouring under eclipse, the former looking for a crown which never encircled his brows, the latter destined to a success of inferior dignity in Greece, where he met the blow which closed his career for ever.

It was a part of my duty to seek information about the state of things in Greece from the Government established under British colours at Corfu. There, on the classic soil where Alcinous reigned of old, I was detained till Christmas by an illness which threatened my own happiness as well as the life of another.

The subsequent portion of my voyage was lengthened by contrary winds and other incidental circumstances. A new year had begun before we entered the Archipelago. In our progress up that sea we anchored for the greater part of a wintry Sunday between the Morea and the rocky little island of Hydra. It was an eventful pause. News reached us there of the Emperor Alexander's death at Taganrog. Two of the leading Greek insurgents came on board the 'Revenge.'

After nightfall we were caught in a hurricane. A royal brig attendant on the admiral was lost. Nevertheless we hurried on, as best we could, to Smyrna. Beyond, the winds were still adverse. At the Dardanelles I exchanged the 'Revenge' for the 'Medina,' while the admiral's band softened my regret into tears by playing, as I took leave on deck, the national air of Greece, expressive, as it was, of plaintive and almost hopeless resolution. In short, after a fresh detention in the Strait, I had nothing for it but to get on horseback and ride overland to the city of bazaars and minarets. My interview off Hydra with Prince Alexander Mavrocordato and his companion M. Zographos had cast a deep shade on my diplomatic prospects; but the change of sovereigns in Russia led me to expect some fresh instructions, and it might be of consequence that I should receive them without any avoidable delay. The Greeks had little reason to indulge in flattering dreams of triumph. Whatever their courage might inspire, it was clear that their resources were ebbing down to low-water mark; that acts of a piratical character, imposed perhaps by their necessities, had raised in Christendom feelings of impatience to their disadvantage; and that a lamentable want of union among their chiefs and classes diminished the effect of what still remained to them as elements of resistance. Peace with Turkey on condition of their deliverance from the evils of Mussulman rule and social contact in the Morea, leaving its fortresses to be garrisoned by Turks, seemed by no means entirely excluded from their contemplation. Little might serve to rekindle much brighter views, but for the time it appeared that a sense of weakness had chilled those noble yet perilous aspirations, to which the Hellenic mind is naturally prone.

I had scarcely reached Constantinople when the Secretary of Embassy, who was acting as minister at the time of my

arrival, approached me with a very unpleasant intimation. His first words almost were these: 'I am sorry to inform your Excellency that there is a *traitor in the embassy*.' Of course I asked for the grounds of his information. They were such by his statement as warranted suspicion, but not enough to fix a positive charge on the person suspected. 'Can you refer me,' I said, 'to any one who can fully substantiate what you aver?' He named the Dutch Ambassador, a man of excellent sense, and in every way respectable. Of him I made inquiry, but could only learn that in his persuasion the charge was no fancy. Conceive my embarrassment. Important negotiations were in the wind. The suspected individual was an official channel of communication between the Embassy and the Porte. I esteemed his capacity; his judgment was sound; he had much experience of local affairs; he was in favour with the Turkish ministers. I could not set him aside without a risk of increasing my difficulties with the Porte, nor indeed could I act in that decisive manner with any degree of justice while the grounds of accusation were incomplete.

Enough of this. I had to make the best of an untoward situation. Sooner or later my principal business was to negotiate, and plenty of guidance flowed from my instructions. My attention was notably directed to the pacification of Greece. The renewal of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Russia had also to be hastened by British exertion. The Sultan and his ministers were still inexorable on the former question, nor were they so without good reason of what may be termed the mechanical kind. The Greeks, as I have already intimated, were nearly run to earth, and the burden of the war rested almost entirely upon shoulders well able to bear it. The famous Mehemet Ali, Pasha of Egypt, commanded in Candia, and by means of his son Ibrahim and a powerful squadron threatened the

chief holds of the insurrection, particularly those in the Morea. No true alliance was yet constituted in favour of Greece. Austria, at least in sentiment, sided with the Turks. Russia kept aloof, making it her first point to settle what remained of her own difference with Turkey. It lay at that time almost exclusively with England to bring Sultan Mahmoud and his ministers into a more conciliatory state of mind. The weight of responsibility, which devolved in consequence on me, was not much lessened by the readiness of the Greeks to rely upon our intercession, or the willingness of Russia and France to leave the field open to our single-handed experiment. The Porte had no inclination whatever to entertain our suggestions, and it became evident that her apprehensions would have to be awakened before any wholesome impression could be made.

I did not reach Constantinople till the 27th of February, and even that late arrival at the scene of my intended negotiation was achieved by leaving on board the 'Medina' my family as well as my official correspondence. Important events then came to my knowledge, namely, the accession of Nicholas to the throne of Russia, the Duke of Wellington's mission to St. Petersburg, Lord Strangford's unauthorised suggestion to Count Nesselrode of England's readiness to join the other allies in conference for the pacification of Greece, and the positive disavowal of that notion by the British Government. The instructions which I took with me from London still held good. England was forced to act alone on the subject of Greece, and resolved, in virtue of her unfettered position, to make a single-handed effort in order to obtain the desired pacification. As her diplomatic instrument in Turkey for carrying that purpose into effect, I had to persuade the Porte by means of friendly argument that Turkish interests would be best consulted by its acceptance of our proposed mediation and yielding to those

reiterated demands of Russia which appeared to have justice in their favour.

From the Duke of Wellington I received as much support as it was in his power to give, but he was on his departure at the end of March when his first communications to me were written. He had not then heard from me, nor did I receive his despatches before the 20th of April. He enjoined me officially to assure the Porte that the Russian Government entertained sincerely the most pacific intentions towards Turkey, at the same time that they were determined to obtain a satisfactory execution of their outstanding demands, which his Grace thought just, and no longer to be resisted without imminent danger to the Sultan and his empire. Such were the points of his injunction. With what an honest, friendly earnestness he pressed them on my attention, may be collected from his private letter to me, which, coming from so great a man, can hardly fail to interest the most careless of readers.

ST. PETERSBURG : *March* 27 (15), 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,—I inclose a letter which I think you had better at once communicate *in extenso* to the Reis Effendi. It is precisely the truth as it exists here ; and the Government of the Porte had better know it.

The Porte may rely upon it that the present Emperor will never interfere in the cause of the Greeks, excepting as our own Government would, in the form of a friend : that is as long as he remains at peace. If in a state of hostility, of course H. I. M. will avail himself of every instrument which can be of service to his own cause and injurious to his enemy. But, if at peace with the Porte, H. I. M. will not interfere excepting as a friend. I am likewise quite certain that the desire here is to finish all little questions with the Porte, and to remain at peace.

It is impossible that the Ottoman Government should not see that all the advantage of a final settlement is on their side, and that they should not take the first step towards such settlement, particularly on points in which justice is already on the side of the Emperor. I have, therefore, thought it best to write down clearly and distinctly what I saw and know to be going on here.

Of course, I can give you no instructions, but I consider myself

responsible for the advice I give you to show the official letter which I send with this.

Believe me, ever yours most sincerely,  
(Signed) WELLINGTON.

The Sultan declined receiving a communication of the Duke's letter, and it was only by a little *tour de main* that I overcame his reluctance.

The Duke took with him to England a protocol, being the record of an understanding to which he had brought the Russian Government respecting Greece, and in the following year it formed the basis of that triple convention which received its formal ratification in the month of July.

My own proceedings, separate as they were, and, to say the most of them, preliminary, occupied in its early part the intervening period. A somewhat cold reserve on the part of the Turkish Ministers, and the use they made of their customary forms to keep me at a distance, were warnings of ominous import. I succeeded, however, in obtaining a private interview with the Reis Effendi before the public ceremonies of waiting on the Grand Vizir and Sultan Mahmoud. I had also the advantage of confidential intercourse with M. Minjiacky, the Russian *chargé d'affaires*, a sensible, trustworthy man. He ought to have been superseded by M. Ribeaupierre, invested with the more representative character of envoy, but the expectation of that mark of improvement in the relations between Russia and Turkey was still disappointed. The Porte turned a deaf ear alike to friendly warnings, to useful offers, and to imperative demands. The Greeks, meanwhile, were holding out at Missolonghi, their national assembly was about to meet, and they were in treaty for, if they had not already engaged, the services of three distinguished individuals, Count Capo d'Istria, Sir Richard Church, and Lord Cochrane, in the respective positions of President, General, and Commodore.

A far more important event was at hand. About the middle of June a revolt of the Janissaries took place at Constantinople. It was speedily extinguished in the blood of their leaders, and in the ashes of their establishment. A general and complete suppression of the order ensued, and the attention, the energies, the resources of Mahmoud were utterly absorbed in the formation of a regular army.

The breathing-time thus afforded to Greece, in so far as the Porte was concerned, agreed, or nearly so, with the fall of Missolonghi followed by a great discouragement in the insurgent ranks. Decorum and policy both required that all communications between them and the British Embassy should be carried on with secrecy, and Captain Hamilton, who commanded what little force we had in the Archipelago, became the medium of our confidential intercourse. Through him I received a formal request to intercede on their behalf with the Porte on terms which were more in keeping with the language I heard off Hydra in the month of January than that which had been held, as before stated, by the Greek deputies in Downing Street. This opening for mediation afforded by a voice from under fortune's wheel was lost upon the Turks, who adhered invariably to their cuckoo note, denying the right of any foreign party to come between a sovereign and his rebel subjects. In England the Sultan's vigour in dealing with his refractory Janissaries inspired a certain deference which had the effect of retarding our prosecution of the Greek affair. Much correspondence of temporary interest filled up the interval of many months which preceded the London convention of the 6th of July, 1827. Meanwhile the new Government of Russia was by no means idle. Their *chargé d'affaires* had spared no pains to bring the Porte into a tractable state of mind respecting their own affairs. A formal conference was at length agreed to. It took place at Ackermann, and ended in an apparent



settlement of the differences in question. Articles were signed, and M. Ribeaupierre made at last his appearance in the Turkish capital.

For the time being it was principally at sea that the war made itself felt. Incidental acts of piracy and a mistaken exercise of belligerent rights continued to disturb the peace of Europe and to inflict serious injury on the trade of neutrals. To inflame these causes of inquietude and complaint there prevailed a rumour of some lawless enterprise proposed by Lord Cochrane with the view, it was thought, of increasing his fortune in the waters of Greece under the Hellenic flag. This danger was never realised, but in what light it was regarded at home the following private letter from Mr. Canning to me, under date of July 3, 1826, may best explain:—

I really know not what to say to you about Lord Cochrane and his expedition. Last year our proclamation put him down, but I suppose he is convinced, as I am, upon a little reflection, that the *fulmen* thereof is nearly *brutum*; and that as he cannot be tried for burning Constantinople till he has actually burnt it—after which it may be quite impossible to prove the fact in a court of justice to the satisfaction of twelve London jurymen—he thinks that, being already proscribed from the British service, an exile, and very nearly an outlaw, he has very little to apprehend from any further process of the law, and may gain by a few months' buccaneering in the Archipelago. . . .

What is certain is, first, that Lord C. has sailed in a yacht, nobody knows where. He had been for some months at Brussels; he came over to England furtively, took a review of certain steamboats building in the river Thames, and embarked somewhere in Cornwall—supposed for the Mediterranean.

Secondly, that two frigates have been some time building for the Greek Committee at New York, one of which is now finished, the other not so, or ever likely to be so, as the money for both is not forthcoming, nor indeed for one without selling the other—which the Yankees, who put no enthusiasm in the business, intend to do.

Thirdly, that of the steamboats building here one has sailed, not armed, and that three or four smaller ones, laden with arms, have sailed also—supposed to be intended to furnish the "Perseverance" in some port at which they are to touch on their way.

Now against all these *elements* of a formidable armament our Act of Parliament of 1819 does not afford any *preventive* protection.

Yachts may sail from this country, and so may steamboats, if unarmed, without any question, and so may arms as a matter of merchandise; and, however strong the moral evidence of their destination, the law cannot interfere to stop them. It is only when these elements of armament are combined that they come within the provisions of the law; and if that combination does not take place till they have left this country, the law is powerless against them. The only weak part in this law, *quoad* the Turk, is that the export of cannon might still be prevented by order in Council, as it was last year, when undoubtedly that prohibition made the proclamation effectual. But it would not have had that effect long. Cannon would have been exported to other countries to which the export was not and could not be prohibited, and would have been picked up there by the ships for which they were destined; or what our manufacturers have dreaded most, other countries which have foundries would have got the trade into their hands. The six months' suspension, if we were to believe the representations of the manufacturers, had nearly ruined two of the principal establishments in this country.

The warlike steam vessels and the warlike stores have both cleared out for Malta. But the Act of Parliament (of which, for your edification, I enclose a copy) applies to Malta as strongly as to England, and the Governor would unquestionably put it in force against any attempt to put together the armament *there*. In the Ionian Islands the law has no force; but orders are sent to the Ionian Government not to harbour Lord Cochrane there for an hour.

After all, therefore, perhaps the *entérprise* may be more difficult in execution than in conception. But if it does take place, you must make the best excuse you can, and you may represent the open assistance rendered by the Turk Ibrahim Pasha as increasing in an incalculable degree the difficulty which the British Government has in restraining British subjects.

At length the British Government, associated with France and Russia, to the exclusion of Austria, was able to give a more decided character to its Eastern policy. The articles of the triple convention are too well known, besides having been lately presented afresh to Parliament, for me to think of inserting them here. Peace to be maintained in general, to be restored in particular, the emancipation of the insurgent Greeks on terms consistent with the Sultan's *suzeraineté*, and a strict observance of neutrality with all its obligations in

the meantime, were the professed objects of Great Britain. The respective representatives of the three contracting powers at Constantinople were to be charged with the presentation of an offer of mediation and the demand of an armistice to the Turkish Government. If the overtures were not accepted within a month from the time of their communication, other measures short of hostility were to be taken.

The "Commander of the Faithful" stood out against the efforts of three as he had stood out against those of one. The month assigned to reflection came to an end. The allies kept their word, and three squadrons, forming an united force of nine ships of the line, were brought into Hellenic seas. The object of this formidable movement was to produce a *de facto* armistice by force instead of the one to which the Porte's consent had been unavailingly proposed. The admirals were bound to report their proceedings to the plenipotentiaries residing at head-quarters, who met by agreement every day for the purpose of comparing and considering the respective reports as they came in. On one of the Sundays in October I was on the point of starting for the daily *rendezvous* when a packet from Smyrna was put into my hands. Within it I found a shabby little note addressed in apparent hurry to our consul there by the commander of a small English vessel who, being becalmed at some distance from the Morea, had heard what convinced him that a great battle had taken place between the allied squadrons and the Turco-Egyptian fleet. I put the note into my pocket and went to our place of meeting at the French embassy. The mutual communications which ensued were quite satisfactory. Sir Edward Codrington had met Ibrahim Pasha under sail on his way from the Gulf of Corinth to attack some position of the Greeks, and had checked his progress by a friendly but determined *veto*. Interposition of such a kind was in

perfect keeping with the instructions. Thereupon the conference broke up, and its members had risen to separate, when I placed the ominous note in my French colleague's hand. His Excellency had no sooner read it than he raised his head, exclaiming, "*Trois têtes dans un bonnet, n'est-ce pas ?*" Nothing could be done at the moment, and we parted with a strong shade of anxiety cast upon our previous contentment.

The thunders of broadside and explosion heard by Captain Cotton left no doubt that a decisive, and probably to the Turks a disastrous, event had occurred. Its confirmation, borne upon a flood of cruel details, would soon arrive. What if it looked as having originated with the allies, and the Turks charging it on them were to see it in the light of a treacherous surprise? Would the ambassadors in that case be treated as hostages, and, according to the practice of earlier times, be made to do penance in the Seven Towers? The prospect was by no means attractive, and still less so when it became known that the Porte was already in possession of what I had learned from Smyrna, where a great indiscretion had been committed by our consul, who, without apprising me of the fact, had made his Pasha acquainted with the contents of the tell-tale note. It was believed that the Sultan in his first gush of anger meant to deal sharply with the ambassadors, and that he had been diverted from that course by the prudent suggestion of an octogenarian Vizir, the very man who, years before, had been ousted by Mehemet Ali from the government of Egypt. All I can state upon my own personal knowledge is, that we were openly charged by the Reis Effendi with having violated the law of nations, and that the tramp of soldiers making the circuit of the British premises at night confirmed during several days the apprehension of some evil design.

When the battle of Navarino, its cause and its result, came into full light, the Porte's resentment gradually cooled down, at the same time that the Sultan's unbroken adherence to his repulsive policy remained without a shadow of change. In concert with my colleagues I employed the month of November in occasional efforts to obtain a more favourable hearing at the Porte. Explanations were given, arguments were urged, warnings were repeated to no purpose. The lamented decease of Mr. Canning in August had been followed at home by those rather hesitating counsels which are apt to accompany an uncertain tenure of office. Nothing in the shape of instruction had reached me since the astounding incident of Navarino. The object we had to pursue was the pacification of Greece without the menace of war. What then remained for us to do, except to threaten a simultaneous departure, opening the door to incalculable consequences, to confirm the threat by corresponding preparations, and ultimately to give the strongest proof of our truth and consistency by its execution? In the sight of all Europe, moreover, the dignity and honour of our Sovereigns were in danger of being compromised.

More, perhaps much more, remains to be written on this very important portion of the great question so recently set at rest by the Congress of Berlin in a manner which does credit, as most people think, to those who were chiefly concerned in its proceedings. Set at rest *for ever* would be a bold word; but if, like the root of some "vicious weed," the trouble now suppressed should spring up again at a period more or less remote, much present advantage is still our own, and we have good authority for saying that "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE.

## XV.

# RECOLLECTIONS OF THE REVIVAL OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE.

[PART II., NOVEMBER, 1878.]

The instructions under which I left England in the autumn of 1825 related chiefly to Russia, and more particularly, as the reader already knows, to the question of Greece. Their common object, in so far as it appeared capable of treatment at the time, was the restoration of peace either disturbed or threatened in the Levant. Peace in that quarter was disturbed by the Greek insurrection, and endangered to a further extent by certain claims of Russia offensive to Turkey. Insurmountable obstacles, for the most part chargeable on weather, prevented my reaching Constantinople before the 27th of February, 1826. Other instructions, occasioned by the death of the Emperor Alexander and the Duke of Wellington's embassy, awaited me there. A later batch, under dates of the 10th and 14th of February, arrived on the 9th of March. These last instructions were dictated by an apprehension of change in the imperial policy at St. Petersburg, and a consequent danger of impending hostilities. They imposed upon me the duty of acting without delay at the Porte, and pressing the admonitions of the Government with open and somewhat peremptory vehemence on the Sultan and his Ministers.

This may be effectively illustrated by a few words from the authentic correspondence of the time. I was ordered to ask an audience of the Reis Effendi *immediately* on the receipt of the despatch dated the 10th of February, and “to urge him *in the most strenuous manner* to obtain from the Divan an *instant* declaration of their readiness to treat for an accommodation with the Greeks upon any reasonable basis which the Ottoman Government might suggest.”

I was to send the declaration, if it could be obtained, *with as little delay as possible*, to the Duke of Wellington at St. Petersburg, and, if the Divan hesitated, “to tell the Reis Effendi that the Porte was not to reckon upon Great Britain as an ally in a war undertaken against the Porte by Russia for the protection of the Greeks.”

Another important subject occupied several pages of the same despatch, namely, the intelligence, communicated to Mr. Canning by Count Lieven, the Russian ambassador in London, of a plan entertained by the Pasha of Egypt and the Porte for transferring the Christian population of the Morea to the banks of the Nile, and replacing them by a Mussulman population from the same quarter. “Great Britain,” says the instruction, “will not permit the execution of a system of depopulation which exceeds the permitted violences of war, and transgresses the conventional restraints of civilisation.”

This I was ordered to declare to the Porte “*in the most distinct terms*,” provided there was reason to believe that the intelligence in question derived sufficient confirmation either from reliable sources or from positive facts.

The communications which ensued between the British Embassy and the Ottoman Minister were anything but satisfactory. The Porte, in reply to every urgent inquiry, assumed an air of indignant innocence, but shrank at the

same time from giving a clear unquestionable denial of the charge. Ibrahim Pasha conducted his operations in Greece with that degree of unsparing cruelty which justified the worst suspicions, but no overt act was traced to him with the effect of proving that he had adopted the alleged plan.

Much more, say a volume, might be written to explain in full the discussions and transactions of the year now treated of; but articles of a review have their allotted, though somewhat elastic, limits, and it is time to go forward instead of lingering to no good purpose over a bygone period.

It is right, nevertheless, to premise that the negotiations, or rather the efforts to produce them, conducted by one or more of the embassies, covered a space of twenty-one months, including the suppression of the Janissaries and the Turko-Russian conference at Ackerman, on the conclusion of which M. de Ribeaupierre arrived at Constantinople as envoy, and his appearance in this character seemed to announce the restoration of a durable peace between the Czar and the Sultan. The limited functions of *chargé d'affaires* had been previously exercised by Monsieur Minciacky, who left no reason to doubt his having given what little support his position allowed to the steps I had to take at the Porte in obedience to my instructions.

The Greeks meanwhile, impelled by a sense of increased weakness, were anxious to take refuge from despair under British mediation, and the Turks were resolved in similar degree to stand out for a complete suppression of their resistance by force of arms. The Sultan gathered strength to this resolution from the sympathies of Austria, and the ill-concealed language of the Internuncio in favour of Turkish unwillingness to take our offers into friendly consideration.

Intrigues, which have since come to light with the force



of conviction, were secretly on foot, and tended, no doubt, to stimulate that political obstinacy which in fact needed no such aid, as its resistance to the battle of Navarino and the retirement of the ambassadors sufficiently proved.

It is not at all unlikely that the latter event was invested with a deceptive colouring by the agents of intrigue. Their dupes were not long in discovering the fallacy and lamenting its effects. They perceived, when it was too late, that they had thrown away their last chance, nay, their best prospect of bringing the war to a close on moderate terms, and avoiding its extension to other more powerful and dangerous adversaries. The allies wished to relieve the insurgent Greeks from Turkish misrule by peaceable means; but it was their determination at any cost to preserve the lawful trade of nations in the Levant waters from piracy and every other kind of violent and injurious interruption.

On the 8th of December, rather more than six weeks after the destruction of the Turkish fleet, when every hope of a peaceful issue by diplomacy was exhausted, the French and British embassies embarked. The Russians followed a few days later. The application for passports had been rejected by the Porte. The French were the first on board. The English party, including of course the ambassador and his family, had to find their way after dark to the two small mercantile vessels hired for their voyage. A fresh north wind with rain had the good effect of screening them from public notice, and giving them a quick night passage to the Dardanelles, where the Pasha in command received their compliments with courtesy, and allowed them to pursue their exodus without a moment's detention. In spite of much talk about the danger of meeting with pirates in the Archipelago, we got safely to Smyrna, where a frigate commanded by Captain Crofton was in waiting to receive and convey us into smoother waters. Communication with the

Greeks on our part was out of the question, but it was satisfactory to know that recent events had relieved them for the time from any immediate attack by the Turkish forces. The relief had not come too soon. They were so reduced in means and hopes, that the terms of peace they were ready to accept might have favoured my offers of mediation at the Porte, if, taken as proofs of weakness, they had not confirmed the Sultan in his resolution to stand out against every specific overture short of absolute submission.

That precious breathing-time, which had been afforded to Greece by the mutiny and suppression of the Janissaries, was preceded by an outbreak of plague, moderate in character and extent, but alarming enough to make communication more or less a matter of danger, and consequently to slacken the flow of public business, which in Turkey is never remarkable for its rapidity. Cases of the fatal disease had occurred in a street adjoining the British Embassy, and it had become necessary to adopt the usual measures of restriction on personal intercourse, and the fumigation of everything wanted from without for domestic use. Ambassadors were not exempted from this inconvenient operation, and it fell to my lot to undergo the unsavoury process on my return from a visit to the Turkish prison, or Bagnio, as it was called. This touch of a well-known calamity is memorable as having been the last appearance of plague at Constantinople, or indeed in Egypt, where it was thought to originate, as it did to all appearance in the time of Pericles, its illustrious victim.

The homeward voyage was lengthened by a visit to Malta and a much longer stay at Corfu, where it was natural to expect, from day to day, that despatches indicating the views of Government would shortly arrive. On failure of this expectation no course remained but to proceed overland without further delay. The Ministry, meanwhile, had

undergone a considerable change. The Duke of Wellington had become the head of a new combination; Lord Dudley was Minister for Foreign Affairs. The cause of Greek independence seemed to have gained nothing by the change. "Untoward" was the epithet attached *ex cathedrâ* to the battle of Navarino. Russia, on the other hand, was preparing for war with Turkey. What line would be taken by England was by no means clear to public conception. The Russian declaration of war took place in April. For its cause or excuse the Emperor Nicholas was at liberty to plead the language employed by Sultan Mahmoud in a proclamation issued after the departure of the ambassadors from Constantinople. That the Sultan was ill advised in taking so hazardous a step, can hardly be doubted when the consequences, fatal as they were to his policy, are taken into consideration. It is reasonable enough to suppose that he was led into that mistake by the intrigues of those who were alien to the triple convention, although there was ample ground in the Sultan's character to account for any degree of intemperance on his part. Be that as it may, the Russians, in declaring war pursuant to their own impulse, did not break off from the obligations imposed on them by their special alliance with France and England. The London Cabinet had to choose between a suspension of all proceedings calculated to carry their declared purpose into effect, and the adoption of some plan sufficient to obtain a practical armistice in the Morea. It was not easy to understand how there could be any hesitation on the subject. Russia of the Greek Church had agreed by treaty with Protestant England and Catholic France to bring about a state of peace in the Levant which would have the effect of wresting Christian Greece from Mohammedan misrule. Was it possible for such an alliance to shrink in utter failure before the obstinate resistance of such an opponent, contending for

so bad a cause? Our great captain was not long in taking his final resolution. He accepted the offer of France to send a powerful expedition into the Morea on behalf of the Alliance, and accordingly an army, rated at 20,000 strong, took up a position in that country under the command of Marshal Maison. Nothing could be more effective, with a view to peace, than such a measure, and nothing more generous and trustworthy than the conduct of the French Government throughout this trying period. England had no reason to regret the confidence she placed in her gallant ally.

A few weeks later diplomatic measures were adopted in keeping with the military movement, and the action required for carrying them out was common to the three Powers. The position of Russia as a belligerent did not prevent M. Ribeaupierre from joining General Guilleminot and myself in the Bay of Poros, and acting in concert with his previous colleagues for the purpose which our respective instructions had jointly in view.

At this point some little advantage may perhaps accrue from stating rather more particularly than heretofore in what manner or to what degree the abolition of the Janisaries and the Sultan's consequent privation of troops had operated on the mind and relaxed energies of Greece. The insurgents could reasonably hope for a breathing-time, precious, even if short in its duration. The Greeks in their recent extremity had awakened sympathies which were not slow to produce an encouraging effect. The fall of Missolonghi had been attended with such heroic actions and such affecting circumstances that their partisans in every country bestirred themselves to get assistance for them, either in money, or in arms, provisions, and clothing. Their actual necessities concurred with their prospective hopes to animate their patriotic zeal.

It was somewhat later, during the interval between the fall of Missolonghi and the signature of the triple convention that the Greeks looked abroad for leaders capable of giving effect to the last remnant of their nearly exhausted means. Lieutenant-Colonel Fabvier, a French officer of distinguished merit, had already the command of a portion of their reduced and disheartened troops. In their distress they turned towards the British Isles, and finally succeeded in obtaining the services of Lord Cochrane for their navy and of Colonel Church for their army. The former of these enterprising commanders added, while in their service, but little to his brilliant reputation. The latter served his new country, as it may be called, long and usefully with the success of a Fabius rather than of a Cæsar, and died in Athens at a very advanced age.

It remained for the Greeks to make a more important but also a more doubtful acquisition in the person of Count John Capo d'Istria. Before they came to any decision reference was made to my opinion, and, to say the truth, I encountered no small difficulty in making up my mind. The choice of a president in the very crisis of their affairs would probably determine the fortunes of the insurrection. Count Capo d'Istria had much to recommend him to their confidence. He possessed abilities above the common standard. Though self-taught, his knowledge was of the European cast. He had learned state-business and the art of diplomatic writing in a ready school. He had large intercourse with the statesmen of several countries. He had the credit of having promoted the Greek insurrection in its beginning, and of having sacrificed his position in Russia to that cause. Above all, he was a Greek, a Greek of the Ionian Islands, but still a Greek. With a full recognition of the advantages thus attached to his person, my previous acquaintance with him called for a close consideration before his title to the

entire confidence of Greece could be admitted. I knew that with plausible manners and an habitual air of candour he joined a natural *finesse* which bordered occasionally on deception. I knew that he could hate free England and serve despotic Russia at the same time. I thought it by no means impossible that he might be a Greek in sentiment and not the less a Russian by position. If prepared to act with independence, he would not only risk the loss of his claim to Russian support, but he would also be liable to the cravings of personal ambition, for the indulgence of which the character of the Greeks and the condition of their country would offer abundant temptations.

The two scales of the balance were thus brought to an equipoise. But a necessity, which could not with safety be thrown aside, caused the former of them to preponderate. The Greeks stood in need of a foreigner to direct their counsels, first, for the purpose of overruling their internal factions, and, secondly, for that of linking their course of operations with the established practice of Europe. Count Capo d'Istria was to all appearance the only foreign statesman whose qualities and circumstances at all corresponded with the required conditions. It was an obvious conclusion that the Greeks would act wisely in offering him the Presidency, and hence the offer being made was graciously accepted and carried duly into effect after an interval of several months.

The Count was in function as President when the three representatives reached their field of conference at or off the insular village of Poros. It was a part of their duty to consult with him, or rather to obtain information by his means respecting the actual condition and future prospects of Greece. The President lived on shore, where also the Russian Plenipotentiary fixed his abode. The French and English ambassadors stayed on board their respective ships.

An armistice, not established by convention, but existing *de facto*, prevailed throughout the Morea. The securities for its duration were the French army on shore, and the English squadron either in the harbour of Navarino or near it. The Greeks had a small force on the continent not far from Missolonghi. Athens remained in possession of the Turks. The Russian forces were invading Turkey on the Danubian side of the Black Sea. England and France were still in a state of formal peace with the Porte, and the Dutch ambassador at Constantinople was the depositary of our mercantile interests in Turkey.

The situation had little to recommend it in point of convenience. As the season advanced, our communications were occasionally interrupted by strong gales of wind and other forms of inclement weather. Our Russian colleague had the double advantage of being on dry land and near the President, who was himself very ill lodged in a very small town, but neither of them could entirely avoid his share in the common fund of troubles.

Such, in short, was the state of affairs, and the position of those who were called upon to lay the foundations of a new Greece, and also to suppress an old cause of disturbance in the Eastern world. The task, in itself by no means an easy one, was rendered more difficult by the character and relations, and not impossibly by the views, of him to whom we were bound to look for information and friendly assistance. He stood like a party wall between those who owned his authority and those who were commissioned to mature their independence. It was evident that dislike of our interference overpowered his sense of its usefulness and necessity. The failure of our endeavours would have been no disappointment to him. He let fall occasional doubts of our competency, and showed a constant unwillingness to supply those local statistics which he was best qualified to

obtain, and which we required in order to adopt a sound and equitable opinion. It became necessary to control these tendencies of his mind by some display of determination on our side. We gave therefore a peremptory tone to our requisitions, and I did not hesitate to declare that as Venice, the source of his titular distinction, had been raised upon piles, so would we have papers whereon to build the reviving State of Greece. Week after week passed away before we could obtain the desired particulars, and during the tedious interval we had no resource but to talk over our respective impressions and to familiarise ourselves with the more prominent features of our appointed work.

Meanwhile the symptoms of returning peace grew stronger with every day, and it soon became evident that a large portion of the French army then occupying the Morea could be recalled without a shadow of imprudence. Such part of it as Marshal Maison on his retirement left in the country was quite sufficient for any supposable contingency, and I repeat that the confidence reposed in France by her allies was fully justified.

Count Capo d'Istria appears to have thought it a pity that even this reduced force should remain idle. He proposed to the French commander that it should be employed, together, no doubt, with a Greek detachment, in a tempting attack on Athens, and its unsuspecting garrison of Turks. The proposal was not rejected, and even our admiral, to judge from his language in private, was inclined to favour acceptance. It would seem that the Count had reserved me for his latest dupe; and when I told him frankly, in reply to his overture, that an enterprise so objectionable under the circumstances could meet with no countenance from me, he threw himself back in his chair and had not a word to say. It is indeed difficult to imagine how he could have thought a British ambassador capable of taking part



in a surprise at the very best so unfair and inconsistent with the political situation. For him it was natural enough, in the spirit of a Greek President, or in the interest of belligerent Russia, to covet the possession of Athens, nor would the success of the scheme have been at variance with the personal feelings of most Englishmen; but neither France nor England was at war with the Porte, our negotiations were directed to a peaceful settlement, and the armistice, which prevailed *de facto*, spread an ægis of honour over the position of the Turks. My refusal was sure to be approved at home, and it soon came out that the Government of France had put an immediate *veto* on their officer's too genial compliance.

After a term of several weeks, which was almost as trying to health as to patience, we succeeded in obtaining as large an amount of information as we could hope to derive from the country in its disordered, not to say distracted, condition. A natural want of confidence in the efficiency of such loose materials restrained us insensibly from bringing our impressions to a decisive issue. Weariness at length brought on the desired conclusion. Early one morning, after a night of broken sleep, I came to the resolution of urging my colleagues to join in giving a formal character to our repeated discussions and preparatory deliberations. No time was lost in acting on this suggestion. A sketch was drawn up in the form of articles declaring our joint opinion on the several points which had to be settled for the pacification of Greece. They were not many all together, and those of most importance could be counted on the fingers of a single hand.

It was evident that the relative situation of the contending parties could only be one of territorial separation. The limits of independent Greece and its form of government were the questions of most difficulty. With respect to the

latter we had to consider whether it would be best to advise the creation of a monarchy, or that of a republic, single or confederate in its constitution. Regarding the former, what extent of territory would it be suitable to propose for the insurgent Greeks withdrawn from Turkish rule, and endowed with the rights of a separate Power? Was the Porte to be mulcted to the degree of abandoning all that part of its dominions wherein the insurgent banner had been raised, or would it be enough to establish Greek independence within the more classical circumscription of Hellas, the Peloponnesus, and the central islands of the Archipelago?

Considerations of the gravest character affected each and all of these propositions. The Greeks who had defied the Porte were comparatively few and poor. How could they support the charge of a royal Court with all its attendant requirements? Yet they had need of an imposing authority, of a government adapted to their wants, their weaknesses, their passions, and their obligations, capable at once of fostering their good and restraining their evil tendencies, of forming them into a community progressive by means of industry, and inoffensive on principle. Democratic or republican forms were little calculated to secure their internal peace, to conciliate the good will of their neighbours, or to fit them for acquiring the confidence of Europe. On the whole, therefore, our conclusion rested on a form of government kingly in principle, if not by name, subject of course to constitutional limitations leading to gradual enlargement, and consigned to a chief magistrate selected, whether to wear a crown or a princely coronet, from among the families of foreign royalty.

The question of territorial extent was obviously subject in a greater degree to the consent of that sovereign from whom the sacrifice would have to be exacted. Every State

is naturally averse to any curtailment of its dominions, and the Sultan lay under a religious obligation to maintain, if possible, the integrity of his. A cession of territory would, moreover, be doubly repugnant to his feelings when made in favour of subjects set up at his very door in all the pride of triumphant rebellion, and sheltered by the protection of Christian Powers allied with his normal and ever-encroaching rival. If peace and a remission of the Eastern danger were really the chief objects in pursuit, we were bound in reason to put some measure to our demands. We were not at liberty to take for our only guides the admiration of Hellenic genius, or sympathy compounded of religion and humanity.

Such, no doubt, were the sentiments prevailing more or less in Downing Street, and therefore both duty and prudence appeared to circumscribe my sphere of action. It was thought at first that if the future territory of Greece included to the north the sites of Thermopylæ on one side and of Actium on the other, and to the south and east the Morea together with those islands where a Greek population abounded, as much would be obtained as the London Conference was likely to approve, or the Ottoman authorities could be persuaded to cede. In the course of discussion this outline underwent a considerable change. It was deemed preferable to propose an extension of the northern line of frontier to the mountain range which divides Thessaly from the district of Zeitoun. The reasons for this enlargement were mainly geographical, and we had the advantage of the French ambassador's opinion in support of it. General Guilleminot having applied himself to the study of geography, and published a complete map of Greece, his suggestions carried with them a personal weight in addition to the consideration derived from his official character. Reference to papers of this period laid before Parliament a

short time ago will enable the reader to judge in what degree the diplomatic triumvirate went into the subjects committed to their inquiry, and how far their opinions were borne out by the reasons and arguments they detailed collectively to explain them.

Our labours came to an end in the latter half of December, and on Christmas Day His Majesty's frigate, the "Dryad," in which I had taken my full share of numerous conferences with their complement of simultaneous protocols and subsequent reports, was tossing about in sight of Malta, escorted by troops of thunderclouds and flashes of lightning. From Malta, after a pause of some few days, the good ship found its way through the Straits of Messina to Naples, where I completed my communications with the Government at home, and had leisure to recruit my health in the delightful climate of that fascinating city.

Whether at Poros or at Naples, the official correspondence had not always the smooth flow of an unruffled stream. The operation of raising Greece from its bed of ruinous exhaustion had some resemblance to that of replacing a foundered vessel, like the "Eurydice," on the surface of the sea. Opinions would vary as to the method of applying the requisite power; at times the hauling forces might not work in the same line, or the ropes might be entangled, or the pulleys found unequal to their task. Apart from figurative expressions, the Greeks, embodied in their President, had naturally put in their claim to a much greater extent of territory than the grounds of their pretension warranted, and the Russian Envoy at times held language which sounded like the preface to a serious divergence in the views of the triple alliance. The mention of Candia in our joint report from Poros was also a cause of unpleasant disagreement, although it had not been recommended as a part of the emancipated domain,

but only named as an outside object fit for unprejudiced consideration.

There are traces in the unpublished despatches of a rather impatient wish among the authorities in London to discover some opening for a more immediate renewal of negotiations with the Porte. There is also evidence in the same chapter of correspondence that no symptoms but of Mahmoud's unshaken resistance to every proposal of Alliance could be detected at Constantinople. In justice to the Sultan's conduct it must be admitted that, if the sequel proved its flagrant imprudence, the resolution displayed in standing out against the destruction at Navarino, the departure of the embassies, and the war with Russia, did credit in no common degree to his Highness's spirit and strength of mind.

My personal connection with the affairs of Greece was now on the eve of coming to a close, which bore an appearance of finality, though in course of time it turned out to be only a passing interruption. There was no possibility of disguising a certain mistrust of me and my political inclinations entertained at the Foreign Office by its actual chief. There was also on my side a misgiving as to the policy of our Government with respect to Greece in its future relations with Turkey. This twofold motive for seeking to bring the position into a clearer light prevailed with me to take a decisive step for that purpose. I wrote to Lord Aberdeen in consequence, and stated distinctly my readiness to return to Constantinople and carry out his instructions, provided the Conference of London approved and adopted in substance the unanimous opinions submitted as definite results of the conference at Poros. In the contrary case he was to understand that I should prefer retiring from the embassy, and, not to waste time, I consulted the public interests by placing my conditional

resignation at his disposal. The answer arrived without any unnecessary delay. It announced the acceptance of the Poros conclusions by the superior Conference of London, and also the appointment of Sir Robert Gordon as my successor to the Embassy at Constantinople. The surprise occasioned by this contradictory decision was relieved by an item of additional information, to wit, that liberty to consider any counter proposals from the Porte was reserved to each member of the Alliance.

The latitude thus given to the approaching negotiation had its intended effect. The northern frontier of Greece was thrown back to the line originally talked of, but not, it must be allowed, without an important compensation by the establishment of what remained to Greece in a state of unqualified independence.

Many pages of despatch are compressed into this brief statement, in the hope of conveying a general impression of the truth to the reader's mind without taxing his indulgence to the point of weariness.

While Naples is still the scene of these reminiscences, mention may fitly be made of an illustrious person to whom the opportunity was offered of assuming the sovereignty of Greece with the sanction of the three allied Powers. Among the distinguished foreigners then residing there was Prince Leopold, who kindly permitted me to see him from time to time. On one occasion he did me the honour of asking what I thought of his accepting the crown in question. The answer was naturally suggested by the circumstances of Greece emerging languidly from a state of almost absolute depression, and the chances in prospect of its recovery and eventual aggrandisement. Manifold privations and difficulties would have to be encountered for a season more or less protracted, but a prize of most attractive value loomed out in the distance, and a man's own heart could alone be his

adviser in a case composed of such divergent elements. The whole world knows what kind of decision was ultimately taken by the Prince, and we also know how much reason the Greeks have had to look with envy on the Belgians.

It was thought by many at the time that Capo d'Istria had turned the scale in Prince Leopold's mind by holding up to him the proffered kingdom in its darkest colours. There may be some truth in this conjecture, but the naked facts were sufficient to discourage a man in whose high qualities consummate prudence and judicious firmness were more conspicuous than the spirit of daring enterprise.

Greece was a dead letter to me till the early part of 1831. In the interval a great change of administration had taken place. Lord Grey had succeeded to the Duke of Wellington, Lord Palmerston had taken the direction of the Foreign Department. It was proposed by him that I should go on a special mission to Constantinople. His object was to obtain an additional extent of territory for the new independent State. The line of frontier recommended at Poros and sanctioned by the London Conference had not been finally confirmed by the Porte's assent. The Sultan had narrowed the proposed territory by agreement with the French and English ambassadors, and there was reason to believe that the latter in acceding to his Highness's requisition only carried out the instructions of his Government. Lord Palmerston deemed it advisable to correct the lapse, and the task of realising his wish was not only consistent with my personal opinions, but one which from antecedent circumstances seemed naturally to devolve on me.

I made my preparations accordingly, and as soon as the instructions were ready took leave. At my last interview with the Secretary of State I could not conceal my decided apprehension that the terms to be proposed would prove insufficient. Sir James Graham was present; but neither

he nor his colleague could suggest any additional means of surmounting the difficulty.

It was already the month of November before I was at liberty to start. A boisterous passage across the Channel and a journey impeded at times by the inclemency of the season brought me with no unnecessary delay to Naples, and then on to Brindisi, where a frigate commanded by Captain Grey waited to receive me. I lost no time in embarking, and soon reached Corfu, whence the Lord High Commissioner's barque conveyed me to Corinth. The rest of my journey to Napoli di Romania, the temporary seat of the Greek Government, was performed on horseback.

That part of the Morea which I crossed on my road thither was the very type of desolation. A few scattered flocks of sheep, here and there a ruined cottage or a herdsman's hovel, a stray horse or a lean donkey, some little wood in the valleys, and a watercourse marked by aquatic shrubs were the only visible signs of a country either inhabited or capable of habitation. The plain of Argos, as I descended in the evening from the hills, presented a field of greater promise; but the light was too faint for observation, and it had sunk into a settled gloom before the arch of the town gate at Napoli echoed to my horse's feet.

The struggle for independence which left such melancholy traces of its fury had ceased. Turk and Greek were at peace with each other. But Greek was at war with Greek. The Morea, freed from its turbaned oppressor, was the scene of civil conflict. Two hostile parties were in presence, one composed of the *αὐτόχθονες* or local natives and headed by Coletti, whose main strength lay in his mountain followers of more than doubtful character, the other having the prestige of government, but also more of the foreign and doctrinal element than suited the wild habits and lawless notions of the Pelecari and their chief. Coletti had



served in the Court of Ali Pasha of Yanina, no very strict school of morality; he was in high credit with the French, and a reputation, by no means undeserved, for bravery and intelligence gave him a plausible title to their support. The ruling President of Greece at this time was Count Agostino Capo d'Istria, a younger brother of Count John, who had fallen not long before by the hand of an enthusiastic assassin. His abilities were not of a superior cast, and his leaning towards Russia, though it procured him the favour of that power, diminished what little claim he possessed to the confidence of his country. The influence of England was exerted to prevent a collision between the adverse forces, but it made no impression on the Government, and, right or wrong, the insurgents held out for the redress of their grievances. Some skirmishing took place near Argos, and there was bloodshed, but not enough to produce any positive result. Walking one day for exercise on the road to Argos, I met a horseman with blood streaming down his leg. "What has happened to you, my friend?" I said, and he answered in Greek, "There is war, sir!" and war indeed there was of that kind which checks all wholesome progress without creating any remedial energy. Very sad, but what could be done? I added my efforts to those of Mr. Dawkins, our Minister in Greece. All was unavailing. The Government, if it deserved that name, had no ears for any suggestion coming from beyond its own restricted circle. Finally an appeal to the Conference in London was our only resource. I drew up a statement of what I had urged in vain upon the President's consideration, and after sending it to Lord Palmerston resumed my journey to Constantinople.

I found the "Actæon" at anchor in the Dardanelles. Captain Grey had completed his voyage from Napoli in less time than it took the "Alban," a smaller steamer

placed at my disposal by the kindness of Admiral Hotham, to carry me from one coast to the other. I was at liberty to choose between sail and steam. Experience of long detentions from the prevalence of northerly winds induced me to favour the latter. "Have you plenty of coal?" I said to the "Alban's" commander as we passed up the Straits. "Yonder are piles of wood; shall we take a supply on board?" "Quite unnecessary," was the reply; and on we steamed far away from the "Actæon." When alone in the Sea of Marmora our captain discovered that his coal would not last. I was walking on deck when he apprised me of this dilemma. I naturally reminded him of the wood. "How came it," I asked, "that you declined my suggestion?" "He had not been able to gauge the coal." "How much is left?" "Enough for three hours, perhaps a little more." I looked around: the coast was scarcely visible. "Which is the nearest point?" "Sulini, I believe, there on the horizon." "Steer a direct course to it," I added, and turned away. This was done, and our coal just served to reach the place. I was so disgusted that I left the steamer, and proceeded to Constantinople on horseback. The Turks pulled an old battery to pieces, and the stakes it furnished gave fuel to the "Alban's" boiler. But neither did the "Alban" nor myself arrive before the "Actæon." It amused me to think how my reliance on steam, as the vanquisher of sail, had been defeated.

I was now on the scene of action. My colleagues in the approaching negotiation were the Russian Minister and the French *chargé d'affaires*. We had to deal with a Turkish Reis Effendi unknown to me. His name I have forgotten. The Russian was Monsieur de Bonténieff, the Frenchman Monsieur de Varennes—both very estimable members of diplomacy, and no less anxious than myself to obtain the Porte's consent to our proposals.

I have already stated my apprehension that the terms I had to offer, and theirs were the same, would not suffice to carry our point. Swayed by a religious feeling, the Turks will never cede territory except under the pressure of positive necessity. The Greeks are the last to whom they would willingly make a sacrifice of that kind. To sell any portion of the land acquired by their ancestors under the shade of the Prophet's banner is, in their view, a shame and a sacrilege. Moreover, the amount of purchase money to be paid by Greece in return for the required cession was limited, and of little value but what it derived from the guarantee of the Allies. So deep was my conviction of its insufficiency that I looked about for some additional means, if possibly such could be found, for overcoming the scruples of the Porte. It happened that just at this time Mehemet Ali was acting in a manner to make him more than usually an object of suspicion at Constantinople. I had heard something of this jealousy in Greece, and fresh information showed that the fear of danger from Egypt might be expected to work powerfully on the Sultan's mind. The occasion was not to be neglected, and I was fortunate enough to find a secret channel by which impressions derived from that source might be made to favour our proposals. In a quarter of Stamboul called the Fanal, there lived a Greek, with whom I had been long acquainted. He possessed that sort of talent which, used with much patient and timid discretion, had gradually earned him a position of some consequence among the leading Turks, and even a degree of influence at the Seraglio. I had reason to believe him well disposed towards English interests, at least so far as they might tally with his own. I made up my mind, therefore, to throw out a line for his co-operation; but it was necessary to proceed with great circumspection. The slightest alarm given to his timidity would be certain to shut him up, if not to make

him a dangerous confidant. A friendly communication took place, and we agreed to meet. His house, at some considerable distance up the "Golden Horn," was to be the scene of our interview. I promised to go at night, and he undertook to send his own boat for my conveyance. The night appointed for my visit chanced to be one of the most boisterous. A strong north gale with driving rain blew down the harbour. I had to walk no small distance to the water, and then to embark alone on its troubled waves. On board I crouched under my umbrella in utter darkness, and shivered to the blasts that rushed over me. The return was only so far better that the wind no longer beat against our faces.

My conversation with the agent in question led to a satisfactory understanding between us. He engaged to work in my favour with the Sultan; I displayed a readiness to consult his Majesty's wishes to the full length of my tether. A confidential intercourse under his auspices could be maintained simultaneously with the official negotiation. Secrecy was an indispensable condition, and the port now brought into view could only be approached by delicate steering among rocks and quicksands. On the one side, I should have to act independently of my colleagues, whose knowledge of the plan would insure a failure, on the other to awake the Sultan's hopes of eventual assistance from England without committing my government or compromising my own character. Negotiations in Turkey, whether open or secret, are not apt to move by rail. Months were consumed in the twofold process by which I hoped to attain the desired end. We were deep in July before we arrived at the goal, nor did I get rid of the cough, which had crowned my nocturnal adventure, until I anchored once more in the waters of Napoli di Romania, and imbibed the rays of a southern sun.

It would answer no good purpose to explore the labyrinth of papers and conferences which encumbered the pathway to a successful issue. They differed little from other negotiations of the day. Incidents are more significant, and to them, however few, I shall confine my attention. One Reis Effendi died under suspicions of poison. His successor gave us no end of trouble. I stood in need of every appliance to obtain the requisite ascendancy. One cause of difficulty had been foreseen in the very outset. The Grand Vizier was employed on special business in one of the distant provinces, and I knew from experience that the Porte would be likely to use his absence as a pretext for reference and delay. I had drawn Lord Palmerston's attention to the circumstance, and obtained his permission to send a confidential agent to the Vizier's head-quarters. Mr. David Urquhart, who was recommended to me on account of his personal acquaintance with the Minister, undertook the service, and gave me no reason to repent of the precautionary measure. I found it necessary to take the embassy into my own hands. The exercise of this power was left to my own discretion; and though it caused me some regret to supersede the *chargé d'affaires*, I could not hesitate to do so in the interest of my negotiation. Turks revolt from the idea of two co-existing Kings of Brentford. A plurality of ships, on the contrary, commands their respect, and I took care to have a sufficient number at my disposal from time to time. These were precautions of an auxiliary nature. But a stumbling-block of large dimensions stood at the very door. I knew to a certainty that the acting interpreter was not to be trusted. I knew it, but could not venture to put him aside. More danger lay in suspending than in employing his services. I thought it best to have a frank explanation with him at once. Delicacy was out of the question. My opinion of his character was no secret. I told him at our first meeting

in so many words that it was unchanged ; that, nevertheless, I would not make a scandal without fresh cause ; the sole test of his conduct in my judgment would be success ; if my ship went down, his boat should infallibly share its fate. He bowed, and silently accepted the terms. My communications with the Porte continued to pass through him, but of those with the Sultan he had of course no hint whatever. The former took colour chiefly from the Ministers ; the latter had less of outline, but a more substantial reality. In both departments the progress, if any, was step by step. The Sultan in his way fought as hard with me behind the scenes as his Ministers did with my colleagues and me in front of them. An appearance at least of concession in some particulars became a necessity. I yielded to the pressure so far as to consent that the new frontier line of Greece should be shortened, without receding, by having its termini, east and west, at the respective Gulfs of Volo and Arta, the waters of both being thrown open to the trade and vessels of either State. This arrangement, to speak truly, involved a very small sacrifice, and with it the permanent advantage of a more complete separation.

As soon as a complete understanding was effected with the Sultan, there remained the task of making its result acceptable to my colleagues and working it, with their concurrence and with that of the Turkish Plenipotentiaries, into the form of a regular convention. In the midst of one of our joint conferences, a messenger direct from the palace suddenly made his appearance, and announced the Sultan's desire that we should agree to that conclusion which really seemed to promise satisfaction to all parties. Such an intimation could obviously have no binding effect on the representatives of the Alliance, but it created a general inclination to seek the solution of all remaining difficulties in

a fair consideration of his Majesty's wishes. Thus it was that we at length reached our goal. The several points of agreement were thrown into a conventional form, and a final meeting was appointed for signing the document.

We fondly imagined that cup and lip were now brought into contact, and that any apprehension of further disappointment would be entirely misplaced. *Dis aliter visum.* Our place of meeting was an imperial kiosk on the European side of the Bosphorus, half-way between Therapia and Yenikeui. We entered upon business soon after ten o'clock one morning, and broke up at four the next. There was an interval for dinner, and no doubt the pipe, as usual, played its part. The rest of the sixteen hours passed away on wings laden with cavil, expostulation, and complaint. Our Mussulman antagonist began by opening a fire of small shot upon our lines. From mere politeness we gave way on matters of no essential consequence. He took courage, and endeavoured to wring more serious concessions from us. Our refusal provoked him. He was reminded that we had met to sign, and not to dispute. He declared that he would rather cut off his right hand than put his signature to such a convention. We took the liberty of telling him that if he cut off one hand, he would still have to sign with the other. At last it became necessary to threaten him with the Sultan's indignation. Even the fear of that peril did not immediately subdue him. Weariness and despair at length came to our aid, and the hateful convention received his signature before the light of another sun had fully risen upon its pages.

Such were the means, such were the slow and weary steps, by which the new Hellas was lifted up to that great mountain ridge whence the eye of the traveller may range unchecked over the pastures of Thessaly. Six-and-forty years have all but closed over that memorable transaction. So long have the Greeks enjoyed the fertile territory which

was then shaken out of the Sultan's grasp for their benefit, and so long, there is reason to fear, have they left the price of that cession a dead weight on the resources of their confiding benefactors.

The main object of the mission was now accomplished, and my thoughts were at liberty to prepare for an early departure. But I could not of course embark without taking leave of the Sultan. I was given to understand that my final audience would be confidential, and that the occasion would be used to apprise me of his Majesty's reliance on the goodwill of England, in case his relations with Egypt should assume a hostile character. My secret ally from the Fanal would act as interpreter, and a special agent would be sent to London on the Sultan's behalf. These were delicate matters, it must be allowed, and I felt keenly the danger of saying either too much or too little. In the one case I might cause very serious embarrassment at home; in the other I might throw the Sultan at once into the arms of Russia. Subsequently, when I had access to the Turkish instructions, it relieved me from much anxiety to find that they tallied entirely with the language I had held. Whatever pledge was implied in that language I amply redeemed by submitting to my chief the expediency of sending a small squadron to keep watch over the ambitious movements of Mehemet Ali. That no such course was taken may or may not be regretted; but the truth is that Lord Grey, our then Prime Minister, having no ships to spare on the existing establishment, could not make up his mind to apply to Parliament for more.

The audience went off as I had been led to expect. It took place in the palace of Beylerbey, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus. For reasons already stated the official interpreter did not attend me. His Highness the Caliph was extremely gracious. For the first time he received me



on his legs. None of his ministers were present. At the close of our political conversation he caused me to be invested with his grand order and the insignia thereof.

I never saw him again ; but the outline of his character and person as they appeared to me in his lifetime may here find an appropriate place. Resolution and energy were the foremost qualities of Sultan Mahmoud's mind. His natural abilities would hardly have distinguished him in private life. In personal courage, if not deficient, he was by no means superior. His morality, measured by the rules of the Koran, was anything but exemplary. He had no scruple of taking life at pleasure from motives of policy or interest. He was not inattentive to changes of circumstance, or insensible to the requirements of time. There was, even from early days, a vein of liberality in his views. But, either from want of foresight, or owing to a certain rigidity of mind, he missed at critical times the precious opportunity, and incurred thereby an aggravated loss. His reign of more than thirty years was marked by disastrous wars and compulsory cessions. Greece, Egypt, and Algiers escaped successively from his rule. He had to lament the destruction of his fleet at Navarino. On the other hand, he gathered up the reins of sovereign power which had fallen from the hands of his later predecessors ; he repressed rebellion in more than one of the provinces ; and his just resentment crushed the mutinous Janissaries once and for ever. Checked no longer by them, he introduced a system of reforms which tended greatly to renovate the Ottoman Empire, and to bring it into friendly communion with the Powers of Christendom. To him, moreover, is due the formation of a regular and disciplined army in place of a factious, fanatical militia, more dangerous to the country than to its foes. Unfortunately his habits of self-indulgence kept pace with the revival of his authority, and the premature close of his life suspended for a while the progress of im-

provement. Mahmoud, when young, had a rather imposing countenance. His dark beard set off the paleness of his face, but time added nothing to its expression. His stature was slightly below the average standard. His constitution was healthy. He wrote well, he rode well, and acquired a reputation for skill in archery. It may be said with truth that whatever merit he possessed was his own, and that much of what was wrong in his character resulted from circumstances beyond his control. Peace to his memory !

We may now turn back to the subject of Greek affairs. After my departure from Napoli the civil dissensions had not only continued, but assumed a more threatening and dangerous aspect. The Conference acting in London had taken my suggestions into consideration, and in consequence of their being adopted, orders had been sent out to Greece with the view of enforcing the desired effect. A duplicate of the instruction was addressed to me, and it so happened that it came to hand some two or three days after I had learned from Mr. Dawkins that matters were coming to an immediate extremity between the adverse parties. I had a fast sailing cutter at my disposal, and it occurred to me, on a calculation of time and distances, that my duplicate, if sent on at once, might possibly arrive before the original and prevent a fatal explosion. Acting on this hope, I earned the satisfaction of learning afterwards that my despatches had reached Mr. Dawkins on the morning of a day which was to have been terminated by the capture of Fort Palamidi and the subversion of the existing government. The Greeks were happily spared a scene of this perilous and disgraceful kind. But Count Agostino's position was no longer tenable, and his retreat upon St. Petersburg left no doubt as to the source from which he derived his political inspiration. On his way to Odessa he stopped a few days in the Bosphorus. His vessel cast anchor between Buyukdéré, where the Russian Minister

resided, and Therapia, where I was living. With Monsieur de Bouténieff he was in frequent communication. The British Embassy had not the fortune to receive even a card from the ex-Vice-President. With his retirement ended the Capodistrian administration of Greece, which, at first a necessity, and in its progress a questionable benefit, was finally shaken off as a galling and unprofitable burden.

But little remains for me to note. The heats of July had set in when I found myself free to embark. My secret intermediary with the Sultan had not disregarded his own interests while promoting the success of those negotiations which it was my province to conduct. The Island of Samos was about to obtain an independent administration, and he wished to be its governor with the title of Prince. I was heartily disposed to befriend him in this respect, but with the condition that a free constitution should be secured to Samos and its inhabitants. At the moment of embarkation it came to my knowledge that the Prince *in petto* had obtained the Sultan's consent to his appointment, but left the Samians to whistle for their constitution. It looked as if I had been purposely entrapped; but, however that might be, it was too late for me to take any counter step or even to seek an explanation.

Under this passing cloud the sails were set, and I turned my back once more on the city of Constantine. Napoli di Romania lay in our way, and we sailed up the gulf, but with no intention of making any stay in its waters. A deputation was sent off, headed by Colocotroni, and composed of other notables more or less distinguished by their conduct or position. After the customary interchange of news and compliments, I was requested to state my opinion as to what should be the policy of Greece when left to the enjoyment of its newly acquired independence. My first reply was an expression of surprise that, having worked out their freedom at so much cost, they should look to a stranger,

however desirous to help them, for advice as to their future course. They were not discouraged by this evasion, but returned more pressingly to the charge. Finding it useless to parry their advances any further, I said that since they appeared to value my opinion in good earnest, I would not withhold it, more especially as it might be conveyed to them in half a dozen words. Your immediate business, I continued, is to repair the ravages of war, to plough your lands, to build ships, and above all to increase your families. "Material prosperity is the true basis of moral and political advancement. Institutional securities come in their time. A strong hand is your first need." They smiled and thanked me, but I doubt their having given much heed in practice to my counsels, frank and simple as they were. The convictions which then possessed me on this subject have never varied. But the Greeks do not see with my spectacles. Their "grande idée" is a pernicious illusion. The Turkish Empire is not yet weak enough to become their prey, but it may be used as their garden and field of productive industry. Grant them a natural ambition, they must still employ the means required for its success. Efforts beyond their strength, immoral enterprises, exaggerated pretensions, can only end in failure and humiliation. They have to strike root into a soil which many stubborn conditions of their present existence concur to circumscribe. They have to gather strength from without as well as from within. Their true policy consists in meriting the confidence of Europe, and cultivating the goodwill of their neighbours, at the same time that they give free play to the springs of internal progress, and uphold, for their protection, the authority of law in all its departments. The loftiest trees have drawn the principle of life from slips or seeds, and risen to their majestic height by the slow accessions of annual growth.

Our voyage came to a close at Ancona, and the remainder of our way to London was only the work of a few days.

The joy of returning to a peaceful home was enhanced by the kind and flattering approval with which I was greeted by Palmerston. Strange to say, a few weeks later, while I was still but the length of a moderate line of houses from his abode in Great Stanhope Street, he never disclosed the slightest wish to hear what I thought of the Greeks in their actual position, or of what remained to be done in order to place the administration of their country on a firm and suitable footing. His choice of a Bavarian lad to wear the crown of Greece had nothing but the scarcity of candidates to recommend it. The Regency constructed under his auspices could hardly have been formed of elements more incongruous and unpromising. The character of Prince Otho, which in later years operated so fatally on the interests of Greece, might easily have been ascertained from the books of the Jesuits by whom he was brought up. Without pretending to any peculiar sagacity, I could have pointed to the danger of setting up three regents invested with co-ordinate powers. The Greeks had already broken into three parties, and they would be sure to paralyse the action of the government by sowing dissension among its directors, one of whom was to be the nominal chief, *primus inter pares*—an object of jealousy to his colleagues, and himself exposed to the temptation of coveting a more than equal share of authority. There may have been reasons for incurring the hazards of a distracted Regency; but if the measure was unavoidable, the results of that necessity are not the less to be deplored. To say the least, we were unfortunate in what was done for Greece at a time when its future destinies were in the mould; nor were we more happy in what we declined to do for Turkey at the same decisive period. It followed upon the Sultan's disappointment that, in despair of getting help from England, he turned with open arms towards Russia, and, come what might, accepted the aid of a Russian army encamped within the forts of the

Bosphorus, and also within sight of his defenceless capital. The ground we then lost was indeed recovered some ten years later, but at no small expense, in the very teeth of France, and even at the risk of a general war.

Although I have reached the close of our subject, as expressed by the heading of this article, I cannot lose sight of the occasion on which to all appearance the papers relating to it were recently presented to Parliament. A war between Russia and Turkey can hardly take place without affecting the interests of Greece, or at least operating sensibly on the feelings of its inhabitants. Such a war as that which found its end in the Preliminaries of San Stefano and their correction by the Congress of Berlin, could not possibly leave unmoved those views of future enlargement which are so fondly cherished by the Hellenic mind. The victories of Russia, the embarrassments of Turkey, and the Slavonic encroachments have concurred to edge their appetite for territorial extension, and to bristle up their cherished pretensions to the succession whenever it may please Christendom to smooth the way for that fatality. If the information gathered from newspapers may be credited, they accuse the British Government of having deserted their cause, they are discontented with the Congress for limiting its favour to a simple recommendation, and they reproach the Porte with acts of wanton cruelty committed by Turkish soldiers in Thessaly and elsewhere.

It lies not with me to determine the measure of right or wrong which attaches to such complaints, but I venture to offer some few remarks on the relations, whether of neighbourhood, of custom, or of treaty, in which the Hellenic kingdom stands towards the Ottoman Empire and its sovereign. At best they cannot be much more than superficial, and the space which remains for expressing them is already much reduced.

The main object of the late Congress was peace arranged

in a spirit of compromise on such grounds as to offer a fair prospect of its duration. The claims of Greece were admitted for consideration, and the Porte was finally advised to rectify the frontier of that kingdom. That friendly recommendation could only apply to the line of boundary which begins at the Gulf of Volo and terminates in that of Arta. That line was adopted with a view to the separation of both parties, and the defence of the weaker one. It was declared by the Convention of July 9 (21), 1832, to be a fixed and irrevocable settlement.

There is reason to believe that the Greeks entertain a claim to Thessaly and even to Epirus also. If that be true, the term *rectification* would have to give way to that of *cession*, and, it must be allowed, to a cession of considerable extent and corresponding value. If the Sultan could be persuaded to make so great a sacrifice, which is extremely improbable, he would naturally insist upon an indemnity, difficult if not impossible for Greece to pay, or, after experience of the past, to be secured by the guarantee of friendly Powers. With regard to the principles of separation and defence the maps present no local features equal to those which mark the present frontier. Thessaly, with the help of Pindus, might give to Greece a mountain boundary, but one of greater length, and therefore inferior as a line of defence. Epirus, to judge from its standing in the maps, possesses no such advantage on its northern side.

The Greek who learns from history or by national tradition in what manner his ancestors were dethroned and degraded by the armies of Islam, and who perhaps has felt the weight of Mussulman misrule in his own generation, can hardly fail to sigh for a more complete emancipation of his race and a more extensive dominion for its glory and security. But the Turk on his side is equally open to fear of losing the proud, imperious mastery so hardly won by his Caliphs, and at times so pitilessly exercised by himself, to

say nothing of the jealous vigilance and haughty reserve with which the authority of a people alien in creed and manners has to be guarded.

It would seem, therefore, that a simple rectification of the frontier is all that can be reasonably expected, and if the localities admit of so plausible an adjustment, the Porte would do well to accept the resolution of Congress, and be ready to give it the desired effect.

Mere justice requires that the system of liberal reform, to which the Ottoman authorities are solemnly pledged, and which is partly in course of operation, should be taken into the account, especially as English good faith is formally engaged to promote its success with all the influence derived from treaty, acknowledged power, and practical experience.

The Eastern Question is not so dead but that it may work out its own solution upon the failure of present expedients; and if it should be found impossible for the ill-matched elements of Turkish power to satisfy the requirements of Europe, the claims of native occupancy, and inheritance never lawfully forfeited, may fairly obtain a favourable and effectual hearing. It rests with Greece, as now constituted, to consider by what untainted rules of policy, by what measures of internal development, she may prepare for the eventual abdication, remembering always that for neighbours mutual goodwill, leading to confidence, is a vital condition of that peace so earnestly maintained by the Congress of Berlin.

STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE.

THE END



